

The 'Feminization' of the Everyday: Examining the Gendered Nature of Worker
Resistance within the Transnational Call Center Industry

by

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the complex relationships that exist between gender, everyday forms of worker agency and resistance, and the global political economy. I argue that the gendered division of labour within the global political economy has led to the development of gendered opportunity structures of worker resistance. Further, by gendering James C. Scott's conception of a 'spectrum of resistance' (Tripp 1997, p.5; Scott 1993, p.93-94), I assert that the gendered opportunity structures of worker resistance within the Canadian transnational call center can be usefully mapped and interrogated. With women increasingly taking on some of the most precarious jobs in the global economy it has become more difficult for them to pursue more overt and collective forms of action and resistance. Thus, this dissertation examines the role that everyday forms of worker resistance play in challenging unjust and unfair management practices within the highly feminized transnational call center industry, and what significance these actions have for challenging or even disrupting the global political economy. In doing so, the dissertation builds on Scott's foundational work on 'everyday forms of resistance', as well as existing feminist IR and IPE scholarship concerned with the everyday as a central site of analysis. Ultimately this dissertation suggests that in addition to discussing the 'feminization' of certain workforces, it is also necessary to begin discussing the feminization of certain forms of worker resistance as well (Ustubici 2009)—in particular, those forms of resistance which are of a more everyday nature. Additionally, this dissertation presents an explicitly feminist model of 'everyday IPE' (which I refer to as a feminist everyday politics of the global economy, or FEPGE, approach) that builds on Hobson and Seabrooke's (2007) 'EIPE' framework, but which allows for a more nuanced

understanding of the relationship between gender, everyday actions and resistance, and the international to be brought to light.

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List of Acronyms

BPO – Business Process Outsourcer

CLC – Canadian Labour Congress

CSR – Customer Service Representative

EIPE – Everyday International Political Economy

DEVCO – Cape Breton Development Corporation

FEPGE – Feminist Everyday Politics of the Global Economy

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GPE – Global Political Economy

HR – Human Resources

ILO – International Labour Organization

IMF – International Monetary Fund

IPE – International Political Economy

IR – International Relations

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

REB – Research Ethics Board

RIPE – Regulatory International Political Economy

TV – Television

US – United States

WDC – Windsor Deception Checklist

WTO – World Trade Organization

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‘Women have been subverting the codes determining the spaces in which they move in many more creative and devious ways than we have ever imagined... Women’s acts of resistance, of self-affirmation, as social actors in their different historical and political contexts, are already in themselves subversive to existing power relationships; but women have been ‘sub-verse’ in another sense: in circumventing, uncoding and denying the various, distinct and multi-layered verses in which their subjugation is inscribed and replacing them with their own verses.’

-Saskia Wieringa, 1995, pp. 1-2.

Introduction

In the last two decades, the topic of worker resistance has begun to garner renewed attention by the academic community (Jermier et. al 1994, p.8). This has, in part, been the result of a noticeable shift by scholars from many disciplines away from considerations of ‘social control’ and ‘structure’¹ toward more agency-based studies (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.533). That said, Hodson suggests that the subject has ‘remained conceptually underdeveloped’ within our ‘theoretical models of the workplace’ due to the limited amount of scholarly attention that it has traditionally received (1995, p.79; see also Mulholland 2004, p.710). This is especially true, he notes, of the study of the gendered nature of worker resistance (Hodson 1995, p.103). While this represents an important lacunae within the academic literature pertaining specifically to the workplace, it is important to note that many feminist scholars have highlighted the myriad forms of women’s economic resistance that are present under conditions of economic restructuring

¹ See Simpson (1989) for a critique of the literature on industrial sociology during that time for being too focused on ‘work’ and not focused enough on the ‘workers’ themselves. As Einwohner and Hollander’s (2004) article suggests, Simpson’s call for a return to worker agency as a key focus of research seems to have been heeded.

and globalization, which may or may not take place within the traditional workplace setting.²

This dissertation aims to address the gap in the ‘theoretical models of the workplace’ identified by Hodson (1995) by incorporating and building on the insights offered by this existing feminist literature in order to explore the gendered nature of worker resistance at the everyday level of the call center workplace.³ Worker resistance—whether undertaken on an individual or collective basis, or in an overt or covert manner—is defined here as any action undertaken on the part of a worker, or workers, which serves to ‘challenge and subvert their marginalization and subordination’ (Gunawardena and Kingsolver 2007, p.10), as well as to confront existing power relations, both within the workplace, as well as outside the workplace (Mulholland 2002, p.299; Murphy 1998, pp.511-515). Although, even when acts of worker resistance do not lead to immediate or visible changes within—or outside—the workplace, they should still be viewed as important because they allow workers an opportunity to ‘manifes[t] their freedom and their resistance’ (Lindgren and Sederblad 2006, p.196) and ‘...attemp[t] to regain dignity in the face of organizations of work that violate workers’ interests, limit their prerogatives and undermine their autonomy’ (Hodson 1995, p.80). Further, in line with James C. Scott’s work (which I discuss in more depth in chapter one), I view all forms of resistance as being situated

² See Rowbotham and Mitter 1994; Mitter 1994; Desai 2009; Moghadam 1999; Gunewardena and Kingsolver 2007; Anglin and Lamphere 2007; Gunewardena 2007; Marchand and Runyan 2000; Kromhout 2000; Bergeron 2001; Eschle and Maignushca 2007.

³ Here I also aim to contribute to an existing body of literature that examines the gendered nature of resistance (see Ustubici 2009; El-Kholy 2002; Ghosh 2008; Marchand 2005; Harrington 2000; Camp 2004; Smyth and Grijns 1997; Hart 1991; Ong 1987; Sugiman 1992).

along a ‘spectrum of resistance’ that includes individualized and hidden actions, all the way up to open and collective forms of protest (Tripp 1997, p.5; Scott 1993, pp.93-94). As Tripp explains, ‘Scott argues that the traditional scholarly focus on riots, revolutions, strikes, and other overt manifestations of resistance captures only a small fraction of the whole spectrum of resistance, which ranges from small, individual acts of resistance in response to immediate problems to highly organized movements with clear ideological goals, sustained over a long period of time’ (1997, p.5). In chapter five I endeavor to gender the ‘spectrum of resistance’ noted by Scott, by highlighting the ways in which worker’s social positions and identities impact the forms of resistance that they are able, or willing, to undertake. As I discuss in more detail below, it is possible to see a shift in worker resistance practices as a result of the processes of global economic restructuring—with the ‘terrains of resistance’⁴ moving from overt and collective forms of worker resistance⁵ to smaller, ‘everyday’ forms of resistance,⁶ at least for workers within certain economic contexts (Richards 2008, p.97).

⁴ The term ‘terrains of resistance’ is taken from Scott (1989, p.44).

⁵ Here I refer to worker actions that are more likely to be collective in nature, and which are undertaken with the express purpose of attracting attention from management, and workplace superiors in effort to create immediate change within the workplace. Examples of such action include worker protests, strikes, as well as union membership and participation union activities. Although, there are myriad forms of resistance—in particular, women’s economic resistance—which can be seen as collective that are not aimed at traditional union-based participation, or workplace action, such as ‘the formation of worker networks’ (Rowbotham and Mitter 1994, p.4).

⁶ Here I refer to worker actions that are more individualized, and which are largely—although not necessarily—contained within the workplace and hidden from management. These actions need not be undertaken on a purely individual basis, although it is more likely that they will be of an individualized, small-scale nature. Examples identified by Scott include: ‘footdragging, false compliance, pilfering, slander, and sabotage’ (1985, p.32; see also Richards 2008, p.97; Hodson 1995, p.80).

This shift has occurred because, in this new economic climate, overt and collective forms of resistance have become increasingly difficult for certain groups of workers to undertake. This is due in large part to the strict limitations placed on unionization in certain industries (Jensen, 1996; Hale 1996, p.9), as well as the ever-present threat of ‘capital flight’ (Gibson-Graham 1996, p.122; Hale 1996, p.10) with the new transnational manufacturing and service industries. In this dissertation I examine the extent to which this shift in resistance practices has been gendered. In doing so, I employ a feminist methodology to investigate two closely related questions: does the gendered division of labor within the global economy lead to the development of gendered opportunity structures for resistance? And further, has the ‘feminization’ of certain workforces (Standing 1989) in the global economy led to a subsequent ‘feminization’ of certain forms of worker resistance? Here the ‘feminization of resistance’ (Ustubici 2009) incorporates—and reflects—the various factors included in discussions of the ‘feminization of labour’ (e.g. the precarious nature of certain forms of work within the global economy⁷ and the gendered tropes that have aided in creating and maintaining this economic climate) in conceptualizing what factors lead women workers—as well as male workers within highly feminized industries—to undertake certain forms of resistance.⁸ The term ‘feminization of resistance’ refers to the increase in more individualized forms of resistance within certain workplaces, such as call centers or export manufacturing factories, where women make up the majority of workers, due in large part to pervasive

⁷ See Standing’s (1989) discussion of the ‘feminization of labour.’

⁸ Beneria and Roldan’s (1987) work also seems to suggest a ‘feminization of resistance,’ as they state ‘seeing women simply in terms of the pull of capital denies that their own resistance and struggles...while clearly subject to significant constraints due to their subordination in society, derive from a strategy of their own’ (cited in Rowbotham and Mitter 1994, p.2).

and longstanding gendered assumptions about service work (Bonds 2006). Ustubici (2009) introduced this phrase in her study of the 2006 Novamed strike at the ‘Antalya Free Zone’ in Turkey. My usage of the term builds on aspects outlined by Ustubici (2009), but it differs insofar as everyday resistance strategies are placed at the center of analysis.⁹ Relatedly, I also draw on Sugiman’s (1992) work on the ‘gendered strategies of worker resistance’ within the United Autoworkers Union. Although, again, as with Ustubici’s work, our focuses differ, as I am looking at more individualized forms of resistance, and Sugiman was examining collective forms of resistance.

I also explore how and why these gendered ‘everyday’ actions matter for the global political economy. That is, how does the examination and analysis of these seemingly insignificant actions serve to improve our understandings of worker resistance, and the global political economy in general? I argue that the gendered division of labour evident in the global economy, in which women workers have increasingly come to comprise a large proportion of the transnational service industry workforces, has led to different gendered opportunity structures of resistance for workers, and that this can be mapped along a gendered ‘spectrum of resistance’ (Tripp 1997, p.5). Here it should be noted that while the language I use to describe the gendered nature of resistance within the transnational call center industry (and the global economy in general)—i.e. gendered opportunity structures of resistance¹⁰—bears some similarity to the term ‘political

⁹ While Ustubici focuses almost exclusively on women’s collective resistance, her study also included examples of ‘everyday’ forms of resistance (see 2009, pp.25-26).

¹⁰ Sugiman’s (1992) study mentions gendered opportunities. As she explains, ‘a gendered strategy encompasses both the material realities of workers’ lives (for example, men’s and women’s place in the division of wage labour and domestic labour) and their

opportunity structure' used within social movements literature (Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Giugni 2011, p.271),¹¹ it did not develop out of this framework, and differs in several key aspects. As Meyer and Minkoff explain, 'the basic premise [with work on 'political opportunity structures'] is that exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for mobilization, for particular sorts of claims to be advanced rather than others, for particular strategies of influence to be exercised, and for movements to affect mainstream institutional politics and policy' (2004, pp.1457-1458; see also Giugni 2011, p.271).¹² They continue, noting that 'political opportunity theory promises a means to predict variance in the periodicity, style, and content of activist claims over time and variance

perception of these objective realities (for example the internalization of gender ideologies). A strategy is not simply a calculated plan of action. Rather, it is an approach based on a configuration of emotional responses, patterned behaviours, intellectual assertions, and reasoned decisions. *Insofar as men and women are gendered subjects who occupy distinct positions in society, and who thereby face different opportunities and constraints* [emphasis added], they approach and contest the workplace in *gendered ways*' (Sugiman 1992, p.3, emphasis in original). My analysis very much builds on this observation. Also, McCammon et al. (2001) explicitly discuss 'gendered opportunity structures' in relation to efforts on the part of U.S. women's suffrage movements. However, again, as with other, broader work concerned with social movements, my work differs in focus, as I aim to examine smaller, more individualized actions.

¹¹ As Guigni notes, 'for the good and for the bad, the concept of political opportunity has dominated research and discussions on social movements and contentious politics during the last decades' (2011, p.271).

¹² As Giugni explains, 'Although Lipsky (1968) paved the way to an analysis of "protest as political resource" and Eisinger (1973) probably introduced the concept of political opportunity structures in the field, the first comprehensive treatment of opportunities was offered by Tilly in *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1978). For this author, opportunities are but one aspect of a more general model made up of five components: interests, organization, mobilization, collective action, and opportunities. In this context, opportunity "describes the relationship between the population's interests and the current state of the world around it" (Tilly 1978, p. 55) and refers to the extent to which power, repression (and facilitation), and opportunity (and threat) provides options for collective action' (Giugni 2011, p.272).

across institutional contexts' (Meyer and Minkoff 2004, p.1458).¹³ My research differs from this approach in that I am concerned not with collective action, or social movements, but rather smaller, more everyday forms of action (and the impact that the broader global gendered division of labour has on these gendered strategies).¹⁴ Although, it should be noted here that Scott argued that larger, more collective forms of resistance and protest can not be understood fully without also taking these smaller types of action into account (1993, p.94). Further, given the nature of the worker actions that I am focusing on, my research is not concerned with exploring political institutions, political processes, or policy outcomes, per se, which serve as the central focus of a great deal of work done within 'political opportunity theory' (Myer and Minkoff 2004).¹⁵ In short, I

¹³ Macdonald offers a feminist critique of this concept, noting that 'concepts such as political opportunity structure and issue framing help explain the barriers to women's movements' mobilization around trade issues. However, the dominant interpretations of these concepts, rooted in liberal individualist assumptions, fail to analyze some of the social hierarchies based in gender, race, and class that help create the political opportunity structures and framing processes. The fact that women are less likely to access to resources, whether material or ideological, and that men and male-dominated groups are more likely to have access to these resources, is a fact not systematically addressed by these theorists' (2005, p.23). Here there is some overlap between Macdonald's critique and my assertion of the need to pay attention to the ways in which opportunities for worker resistance within the highly gendered global economy are gendered, as we are both asserting the need to look at how gendered systems and power structures impact, and in some cases restrict, opportunities for resistance. Although, again, our central focus differs in that I am focused on individual action, and Macdonald (as with many other scholars concerned with social movements) is interested in collective forms of action.

¹⁴ However, there is a common ground between this scholarship and my research in that we are both concerned with exploring 'the relationship between structure and agency' (Myer and Minkoff 2004, p.1463).

¹⁵ Although, scholars such as McCammon et al. argue for 'the need for a broader understanding of opportunity structure than one rooted simply in formal political opportunities' (2001, p.49). In discussing U.S. women's suffrage movements, they assert that 'the shifting gender relations produced a gendered opportunity for women's suffrage by altering attitudes among political decision-makers about the appropriate roles of women in society. That is changing gender relations altered expectations about women's

am interested in exploring the relationships between the global political economy, gender, and everyday forms of worker resistance.

I argue that with women increasingly taking on some of the most precarious and unstable jobs in this new economic climate (Hale 1996, 13; Pyle and Ward 2003, p.471; Marchand and Runyan 2000, p.8; Mills 2003, p.43), it would seem that they are less likely to have the option to undertake overt forms of resistance. Here I take call centers as the central site of analysis, as they represent an excellent example of these trends. In general, as Koch-Schulte notes, ‘call centres are ideal sites for understanding resistance in the modern service-sector workplace’ (2002, p.152). As I explore throughout this dissertation, for the workers employed in this transnationally-situated industry, ‘everyday’ forms of resistance seem to, in many cases, offer a more viable strategy for resistance than overt, direct forms.¹⁶ However, while resistance practices within the call center have tended to manifest largely as everyday forms of resistance (Buchanan 2002), these gendered actions still—in some cases—have the potential to have an impact beyond the workplace, which is why it is important to pay particular attention to the gendered ‘multidirectionality’ of globalization (Freeman 2001).

Before proceeding, it is important to specify my understanding—and usage of—the term ‘gender’ throughout the dissertation. In line with Joan Acker, I see gender as referring to:

participation in the polity, and these changes in gendered expectations increased the willingness of political decision-makers to support suffrage’ (McCammon 2001, p.51).

¹⁶ My focus in this dissertation is in line with Koch-Schulte’s, who asserts that ‘according to people who favour collective resistance, unions are a key component in transforming call centre work. However, the lack of strong union activity in this sector provides justification for my individualized resistance approach’ (2002, p.163).

...inequalities, divisions, and differences socially constructed around assumed distinctions between female and male. Gender is a basic organizing principle in social life, a principle for the allocation of duties, rights, rewards, and power, including the means of violence. Gender is a factor in organizing daily life for individuals, families, communities, [as well as workplaces] and societies as large structures. Women are usually disadvantaged in terms of power and material status and rewards. Gender is neither an essential attribute of individuals nor a constant in social life, but consists of material and symbolic aspects of existence, constantly produced and reproduced in the course of ongoing social activities and practices. Gender necessarily involves bodies of actual people and the ways that they see and experience themselves, their identities. This implies that there are many versions of gender, different masculinities and femininities, lived differently in different times and places (2004, p.20).

Thus, when I refer to the ‘gendered’ nature of worker resistance, I am referring to the connections between the gendered power structures and relations that women (and men) workers live and work within, and the impact that these structures and relations have on the forms of resistance that they pursue. As Acker further asserts, ‘although gender includes female and male, masculine and feminine, women and men, in scholarly and everyday practice, including discussions of globalization, gender often means women’ (2004, p.20). She continues, noting that ‘much of the work on gender and globalization is actually research on women, work, and family under contemporary conditions of economic transformations. This gender research may include men as their actions and practices shape the worlds of women, but the bulk of research on men, work, and the economy is cast as gender-neutral, with the implicit assumption that to talk about men is to talk about the general situation’ (2004, p.20). While I am examining the everyday experiences of both male and female transnational call center workers throughout, an emphasis is certainly placed on women workers in my analysis—although, as Acker so aptly notes, one cannot fully understand women’s experiences without also considering

the gendered power structures they are situated within.¹⁷ I focus more on women workers throughout not only because the majority of call center workers worldwide are women (Bonds 2006, p.35), but also because the industry is structured through the use of problematic and pervasive gendered notions of skill—in particular, the idea that women are inherently better suited to do this type of service work. As a result of this assumption there is a devaluation of labour that occurs because, again, all women are seen to already possess the desired qualities and skills associated with being a call center agent (Huws 2012, p.5; Bonds 2006, p.37; Mulholland 2002, p.296; Buchanan 2002, pp.59-61), and thus the job supposedly requires little (or at least less) extra work on their part to complete. Also, as I argue, the gendered division of labour present within the global economy—which sees women as better suited for particular types of employment, including call center work—also impacts the abilities of men and women to resist. However, I do discuss later in the dissertation the ways in which male workers experience, and make sense of their place within, this highly feminized industry; in particular, I make note of the assertion of a more masculinized salesman identity on the

¹⁷ Although, it is incredibly important to note here that ‘women’ should in no way be read or understood as an all-encompassing category. Women’s (and indeed, men’s) experiences can—and do—vary as a result of myriad factors and ‘social identities’ (Shields 2008, p.303). As Acker notes, ‘gender was and is built into the organization of daily life, but not in the same ways or with the same consequences for everyone. Class and race/ethnic differences, embedded in different histories, mediate the gendered organization of daily life and identity and the gendered deployment of power in the Euro-American capitalist centers and in other countries and areas brought into their orbit through conquest, settlement, colonization, empire, and today’s globalization’ (2004, pp. 24-25; see also Stimpson and Herdt 2014, p.13). Thus, as I outline in chapter two, it is important to adopt an ‘intersectional’ (Shields 2008; Nash 2008) approach to studying people’s everyday experiences.

part of some male call center agents, which can be directly juxtaposed with the more feminized customer care or customer support role.¹⁸

I conducted research in order to determine if workers within the industry were resisting unfair and unjust management practices and, if so, in what forms of worker resistance were they engaged. In addition, I sought to understand how these forms of resistance were gendered. Exploring the gendered everyday forms of worker resistance within this industry also serves to problematize understandings of the global economy currently held within mainstream International Political Economy (IPE) scholarship that places ‘a small number of big and important things’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.1) at the center of analysis. As I hope to demonstrate through my research, this narrow focus can serve to blind scholars to the full spectrum of gendered actions that go into creating and maintaining—or, in some cases, disrupting—the global economy (see Elias 2010, p.603; Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.14).

In the first chapter I provide an in depth overview on the existing literature on the ‘everyday.’ Here I outline Hobson and Seabrooke’s (2010, p.290) recent and useful

¹⁸ As Acker explains, “masculinity’ is a contested term. As Connell (1987, 2000), [Collinson and] Hearn (1996), and others have pointed out, it should be pluralized as ‘masculinities,’ because in any society at any time there are several ways of being a man. Connell (2000) defines masculinities as “configurations of practice within gender relations as well as face-to-face relationships and sexuality” (p. 29). Masculinities are reproduced through organizational/institutional practices, social interaction, and through images, ideals, myths or representations of behaviors and emotions. Hegemonic masculinity is the most desired and admired form, attributed to leaders and other influential figures at particular historical times. More than one hegemonic masculinity may exist simultaneously, although they may share characteristics, as do the business leader and the sports star at the present time’ (2004, p.28)

distinction between the ‘everyday politics’ and ‘everyday life’ approaches to Everyday IPE. While in this dissertation I employ a primarily ‘everyday politics’ approach (grounded in James C. Scott’s work, while still being attentive to the gendered nature of resistance), I also offer an analysis of gender and everyday life present in Henri Lefebvre’s *Critique of Everyday Life*. In doing so, I provide both a gendered analysis of his work, as well as outline one of central theoretical foundations of current ‘everyday life’ Everyday IPE scholarship (and address the importance of this body of work to feminist IPE in general, and my own study, in particular). As I outline, his work, while not unproblematic, offers feminist scholars, including myself, a valuable resource for better understanding the complex connections between gender, everyday life, and resistance and potential transformation. Then in the second section of this chapter, I outline the work of James C. Scott, which, as noted, is of central importance to this project. Here I set out the main arguments presented by Scott, as well as the subsequent ‘gendered’ interpretations of his work that have been presented. In chapter two I discuss existing the Everyday IPE literature—in particular, Hobson and Seabrooke’s (2007) ‘EIPE’ framework, as well as the multiple contributions that feminist IPE and IR scholars have made to this area of inquiry (which, in many cases are not explicitly identified as such)—and build on this scholarship in order to present the feminist everyday politics of the global economy (FEPGE) framework that serves as the heart of this dissertation. In chapter three I discuss the methods and methodology employed with my doctoral research. In particular, I outline the series of semi-structured interviews that I conducted with former transnational call center employees in Ontario during the summer of 2014. The data gathered from these interviews serve as the basis for my feminist everyday

politics of the global economy (or FEPGE)¹⁹ analysis of gendered resistance within the transnational call center industry (which, as noted, I explore in later chapters). In this chapter I also discuss the benefits and drawbacks of using covert participant observation research (especially in relation to Everyday IPE studies), and address the reasons why I decided to omit the data gathered through an initial three-month phase of observational research from this dissertation. I also discuss my use of online discussion forum and blog data to supplement the data gathered through interviews with former call center employees. In the fourth chapter I outline the economic context within which call centers²⁰—and thus call center employees—are situated, paying particular attention to the ‘feminized’ nature of work within this transnationally situated industry. I also address the major constraints that the workers in this industry face in undertaking open forms of

¹⁹ It is important to note that while I am building on Hobson and Seabrooke’s original EIPE approach (and indeed I see my work fitting within the broader category of EIPE, in general), I refer to my approach as a feminist everyday politics of the global economy (rather than International Political Economy). I had originally, following the existing language within the EIPE literature, termed my approach a feminist IPE (or FEIPE) approach. However, during the process of revising my article for *Globalizations*, which offers a condensed version of the arguments and analysis that I have put forward here in my dissertation, one of the special issue editors (Dr. Juanita Elias) suggested that this did not adequately capture or represent the approach I was advocating (personal email, March 2, 2015). Rather, she suggested what I was putting forward was actually more of an everyday feminist politics of the global economy, and so I have since adopted this terminology as it does better get at what I am trying to achieve. The reasons for changing the name of my approach are twofold: first, by referencing ‘everyday politics’ in the title it clearly denotes that my approach is situated within the ‘everyday politics’ category of EIPE research (as is Hobson and Seabrooke’s); and two, by using GPE, rather than IPE, it makes it clear to readers that I am ‘privileging the global arena over inter-national relationships’ (Palan 2013, p.1). However, as Palan notes, ‘nowadays (2013) the two labels are used interchangeably, although the denomination IPE is generally adopted by those who view the field of study as a sub-field of political science and International Relations (IR), whereas GPE is normally the preferred label for those who view it as a trans-disciplinary effort, closer to political economy than to IR’ (Palan 2013, p.1).

²⁰ Larner defines call centers as ‘centralized locations from which services such as sales, reservations, information provision, technical support and banking are delivered to customers remotely’ (2002, p.133).

resistance. I also discuss in more detail the transnational aspects of my case study. In particular I address why the call centers I focused on—despite all being situated within Ontario, Canada—actually can and should be viewed as transnationally situated. By examining worker experiences and actions within these spaces (although clearly located within national borders) we can gain important insight into the nature of the contemporary global economy. In the fifth and final chapter I briefly outline the emerging literature on worker resistance within the transnational call center industry that has begun to place everyday forms of actions at the center of analysis; I also discuss forms of worker resistance that I documented with my own field research. Here I present a typology consisting of two broad types of gendered resistance that I documented within the Canadian transnational call center workplace: i) feminized everyday resistance practices, and ii) distinctly gendered everyday forms of feminized resistance. Finally, in the conclusion, I offer an overview of the arguments and evidence presented throughout, as well as a discussion of what contributions this research makes to existing bodies of scholarship on worker resistance, everyday approaches to IPE (in particular feminist scholarship focused on the everyday), as well as the transnational call center more

Chapter One: Gender, Everyday Life, and Everyday Resistance: An Overview of the Literature

1.1 Gendering Everyday Life: An Analysis of Henri Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life*.²¹

“Women’ in general bear all the weight of everyday life; they are subjected to it much more than ‘men’, in spite of very significant differences according to social classes and groups. Their situation sums up what the everyday is.’

-Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: Volume Two*, 11-12.²²

As previously noted, during the last decade there has been a notable effort on the part of several scholars within the fields of IR and IPE to bring ‘the everyday’ into analyses of the global economy and politics (Hobson and Seabrooke 2010; Hobson and Seabrooke 2007; Davies and Niemann 2002; Davies 2006; Redden and Terry 2013; Elias 2010).²³ In line with this shift in focus toward the everyday as a site of analysis, scholars such as Davies and Niemann have importantly highlighted the valuable theoretical insights that Henri Lefebvre’s foundational work on everyday life can bring to our analyses of global politics (2002; see also Davies 2006).

²¹ This section of chapter three was developed and written during a seminar that I took on Lefebvre’s *Critique of Everyday Life* taught by Dr. Mathew Coleman (The Ohio State University) while he was a visiting professor at Carleton University’s Institute of Political Economy during the summer of 2013. I wish thank Dr. Coleman for his feedback on an earlier version of this section. I also presented an earlier version of this section at the 2015 International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, and I wish to thank Dr. Catia Gregoratti (The University of Lund), who served as the panel discussant at the conference, for her detailed and thoughtful feedback on my paper.

²² See Sylvester (1996, 267) who makes a similar point in relation to women, the everyday, and international relations.

²³ Although as several scholars have importantly highlighted, there already exists a considerable body of feminist IR and IPE literature which places women’s everyday lives and experiences at the center of analyses of global politics, which has unfortunately largely been overlooked, or underutilized, by many ‘Everyday IPE’ scholars (Elias 2010, 608; LeBaron 2010, 891).

Although, here it is important to note that a clear distinction can be made between two differing scholarly approaches within the broader category of Everyday IPE (Hobson and Seabrooke 2010, p.290).²⁴ As Hobson and Seabrooke assert, this growing body of literature can be divided into two different groups: work which takes an ‘everyday politics’ approach, and that which takes an ‘everyday life’ approach to understanding the linkages between the everyday and international (2010, p.290). With the ‘everyday life’ approach (the central focus of the first section of this chapter), ‘the general story [...] is that while everyday subjects are deeply compromised by logics of discipline (much of which they self impose), there is agency to resist. And this agency to resist can be emboldened through a critique of everyday life in order to clarify the normative agenda’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2010, p.298). Further, as they assert, ‘the everyday life literature is largely a critical one that seeks not only to reveal the impact of structures of exploitation on the everyday lives of ordinary people, but is also interested in revealing potential sites of agency’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2010, pp.298-299). On the other hand, ‘...the everyday politics approach places much greater emphasis on analytical agency such that it is primarily concerned with revealing the manifold ways in which everyday actions help shape and transform the world economy’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2010,

²⁴ In outlining the origins of these approaches, Hobson and Seabrooke note that, ‘overall, EPIPE imports insights from the everyday literature that was pioneered outside the discipline. As we explain, the disciplinary/everyday life approach draws from social theorists, such as Henri Lefebvre (1971, 1991b) and Michel Foucault (1980), while the actions-based/ everyday politics approach draws more from the political-anthropological works of James C. Scott (1976, 1985), Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet (1990, 2005) and others. But what unites these variants is that in seeking to bring the everyday actor into focus they issue different visions of the world economy to that provided by mainstream accounts’ (2010, p.290, emphasis in original).

p.299).²⁵ In particular, ‘this approach envisages a variety of forms of agency, ranging from subtle expressions of resistance to more dramatic exercises of defiance on the one hand, as well as subtle expressions of everyday actions that when aggregated can promote change even if this was never the original intention of the individuals concerned’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2010, p.299).

Throughout the dissertation, I primarily take an ‘everyday politics’ position rooted in the work of James C. Scott (given my central focus on everyday forms of resistance)—albeit one that is attentive to the importance of gender, and other intersecting ‘social identities’ (Shields 2008, p.303). However, that said, the ‘everyday life’ approach (and Lefebvre’s work, in particular) also holds the potential to offer valuable insights to feminist IPE and IR scholars, such as myself, who are interested in exploring the complex connections between gender, everyday life, and the global economy. In particular, as I explore below, his work—and here I focus on his influential three volume *Critique of Everyday Life*—when subjected to a careful, gendered reading, hints at the importance of paying attention to women’s unique positionality within society, and how this positionality relates to resistance and potential transformation. This is at the heart of my analysis throughout this

²⁵ Hobson and Seabrooke (2010) distinguish between two different types of agency that underlie each of these approaches to everyday IPE. As they explain, ‘the stress within the everyday life literature is locating potential emancipatory sites of normative agency, primarily by tracing how ordinary people seek to resist or find possible ways to critique the situation that they find themselves in. The critique seeks to reveal possible worlds and emancipatory routes for agency by making ordinary people more self-aware about their daily behavior. While the everyday politics approach is also concerned with emancipatory logics of action, nevertheless the key focus is on what might be called *analytical agency*. This refers to the everyday actions that promote and enable change in the world economy, whether such actions challenge or reinforce certain structures of power’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2010, p.299, emphasis in original).

dissertation of gendered work and resistance within the highly feminized transnational call center industry, and in particular, my focus on the ways that women workers' positionality within the global economy impacts their opportunities for resistance. Also, by undertaking a gendered rereading of Lefebvre's work, one is able to grasp more fully the ways in which women can be seen as important actors within everyday life, in particular, as potential authors of social change, a potential which stems from their unique perspectives and experiences (both within the paid and the unpaid spheres). Although, much like Scott's work—which I outline and discuss in depth in the next section—Lefebvre did not offer an explicit analysis or discussion of the connections between gender and the everyday. While scholars have since offered a gender analysis of Scott's work on everyday resistance (in particular, see Hart 1991), less of an effort has been made to offer a gender analysis of Lefebvre's theorization of everyday life. It is in this first section that I turn to this task.

Lefebvre's foundational work on everyday life—which is presented throughout three volumes of *Critique of Everyday Life*—unquestionably represents one of the most important, and certainly one of the most thorough, attempts to theorize, understand, and ultimately to transform everyday life. His work allowed scholars to begin thinking through the problematic character of everyday life and its relation to modernization in a systematic and focused way. Importantly, Lefebvre's work presented the everyday as a space that was both restrictive and alienating, but also, a space of potentialities and possibilities to be realized which could ultimately lead to the transformation of everyday life (2008a, pp.143, 228-229; Lefebvre 2002, pp.44-46). However, this is not to say that

there are not problematic aspects present in his work. Perhaps one of the most troubling aspects within his theorization of the everyday is his conception and treatment of gender in relation to the everyday. In this section I focus on the ways in which Lefebvre attempted to discuss and understand the importance of gender in relation to everyday life. I begin the section by discussing how Lefebvre—even in the face of his explicitly stated opposition to viewing dialectical thinking in terms of strict binaries, or ‘two dimensionally’ (2002, pp.152-155; Lefebvre 1991, p.39)—operationalizes gendered binaries in order to formulate the central figures of his work, ‘total man’ (reread by Lefebvre as ‘transitional man’) (2008a, pp.64-67) and ‘total woman’ (2002, p.82). However, rather than simply presenting a critique of Lefebvre’s problematic operationalization of gendered binaries in the construction of these figures, I would like to use this critique as a springboard in order to explore in more depth the ways in which the significance of gender and its relation to the everyday is actually expressed in his work.

Overall, I argue that while Lefebvre alludes to the importance that women may have in relation to the everyday and ultimately the critique of everyday life, he ultimately does not push this connection to its logical conclusions according to his own theoretical framework of the everyday and everyday life. I suggest that had Lefebvre actually explored in more depth the connection he begins to make between women and the everyday (and thus reading the everyday as a highly gendered space), he would have conceived not of a ‘total woman’ who was almost entirely passive, but rather a figure that has the potential to transcend and surpass the critical and active capabilities of

‘transitional man,’ because of her unique situatedness in relation to the everyday. Rather than reading as passive, weak, and apolitical, the ‘total woman’ would actually become the transformational woman who is best situated to be able to gain knowledge and thus potentially transform the everyday, according to Lefebvre’s theoretical model.

Although, here it should be noted that transformational woman is not guaranteed to effect change and transformation within everyday life, rather the term transformational woman connotes that, according to Lefebvre’s own reading of women and the everyday, this figure would be the most likely candidate to transform everyday life. In short, and in line with Lefebvre’s approach, I am not suggesting that transformational woman equals transformation necessarily; rather, I am suggesting that of all the actors within the everyday they are perhaps most likely, given their ‘positionality’ (Marchand 2005, p.219), to be able to do so.²⁶ The transformational woman—by way of being a woman—is subject to the most negative aspects of everyday life, however, it is for this very reason that they are most able to potentially create change. The seeds of this argument lie dormant in Lefebvre’s conception of the gender and the everyday, although, ultimately—and disappointingly—he does not grasp, at least not in their entirety, the connections between gender and the everyday and the theoretical significance of this connection in relation to his overall critique of everyday life.

This section represents an attempt to recapture, as well as more fully explore, the latent connections between gender and the everyday—and importantly, potential transformation

²⁶ Ruddick 2004, p.166 makes a similar point.

of the everyday—that are presented in Lefebvre’s work. I conclude by asserting that Lefebvre’s work—while by no means representing an unproblematic account of gender and everyday life—offers valuable theoretical insights for feminist IPE scholars (including myself). And, as noted, his work is particularly useful for my own study, as it allows a clearer picture of the connections between gender, everyday life, and resistance to be brought to light.

Lefebvre’s ‘Total’ (or ‘Transitional’) Man and ‘Total Woman’

In outlining his concept of ‘tridimensionality’ (Lefebvre 2002, pp.153-155), Lefebvre notes that dialectical thought has often been misconstrued as being ‘two dimensional’ (2002, p.152). As he explains, ‘through an initial and predictable misunderstanding, dialectic presents itself as dialogue: with *two* terms, two *dimensions*. Thus, analytic understanding reduces dialectical movement to an opposition’ (Lefebvre 2002, p.152, emphasis in original; Lefebvre 1991, p.39). In light of this Lefebvre presents an image of dialectical thinking that goes beyond this, presenting dialectic thought as something that should be understood ‘tridimensionally’ (2002, pp.150-155). As he asserts, ‘tridimensionality is the level of dialectical movements, or more exactly the level where reality itself is grasped’ (Lefebvre 2002, p.154). However, Lefebvre’s critique of understanding dialectical thought as being ‘two dimensional’ folds back into itself in his presentation of an explicit binary of masculine action (‘total man,’ reread by Lefebvre as ‘transitional man’ (2008a, pp.64-67)²⁷) and feminine inaction (‘total woman’ (2002, p.82)).

²⁷ Thank you to Dr. Mathew Coleman for this point.

As Lefebvre highlights, the concept of ‘total man’ originates with Marx (2008a, p.65), and in short, it represents a figure ‘entirely developed, entirely won back from alienation’ (2008, p.64). While Lefebvre sees the value in such a conception of the wholly disalienated figure, he is careful to note that such a conception should be used carefully in an effort to avoid it ‘becom[ing] an *image of the future* or, even worse, an already accomplished *reality*’ (2008a, p.76, emphasis in original).²⁸ He explains that ‘the *total man* is but a figure on a distant horizon beyond our present vision. He is a limit, an idea, and not a historical fact, and yet we must ‘historicize’ the notion, thinking of it historically and socially’ (Lefebvre 2008a, pp.66-67, 159). Therefore, Lefebvre turns his attention towards formulating what he terms the ‘transitional man,’ who he envisions as a figure that is ‘...moving towards the total man, in other words crossing through alienation—and perhaps alienation at its maximum—the transitional man is ‘disalienating’ himself’ (2008a, p.66). For Lefebvre, total man (that is, man completely free from alienation) is reread as transitional man who is engaged in an on going process of ‘becoming’ (2008a, p.76). This figure importantly holds the potential for change and transformation of society. He is the quintessential figure of potential and possibility.

²⁸As Lefebvre asserts, ‘the theory of alienation and of the ‘total man’ remain the driving force behind the critique of everyday life. They allow us to represent social development as a whole and to determine the direction in which it is going. They also allow us to analyse this becoming, boring down within it for samples, penetrating its details and linking it with the overall system. These notions must be handled with extreme caution, however. We cannot give them an ontological meaning like the concepts in use in traditional philosophy. To use them inconsiderately—speculatively—is extremely hazardous...’ (2008a, p.76).

Contra-total (or rather transitional) man the total woman is a figure that represents a distinct non-transformational being.²⁹ As Lefebvre explains, notably positioning total woman in direct opposition to total man,

The image of the total man was political and revolutionary. It received its inheritance from a long and glorious past. It did not wish to separate virility from masculinity, virtue from skill and manual strength from mental strength; it did not claim to unite them easily. The state, history, wars and philosophy had influenced it, leaving traces and operating a hard process of selection. *The image of total woman is distinctly reformist and apolitical, confused and syncretic* (Lefebvre 2002, p.82, emphasis added).

A quick reading of the terms used to describe and outline total woman would seem to leave little doubt about Lefebvre's conception of women and the everyday. The 'feminine world' (Lefebvre 2002, p.82) depicted is one that is marked by a lack of change, inactivity, and most damningly, non-political (read 'non-transformational,' which for Lefebvre can be seen as the ultimate conceptual rebuff). Quite simply, transitional man changes—or at least holds the distinct potential to change—whereas, total woman remains trapped in her everyday world, unable to move forward, to transform.³⁰ She is the quintessential figure of inertia.

²⁹ In some sense, the picture he presents throughout volume three represents and embodies total woman. Aside from a few glimpses of potentiality and possibility (see in particular, Lefebvre 2008b, p.127, for his discussion of 'miniscule decisions' or 'micro-decisions' as 'freedom rediscovered and experienced'), what is presented is largely a depiction of inertia and non-change (the central qualities assigned to 'total woman' in volume two) (Lefebvre 2002, 82, for examples of this depiction in volume three see Lefebvre 2008b, pp.80, 102, 104-108, 128, 143).

³⁰ An illustrative example of this can be found in volume two, where Lefebvre asserts that 'the housewife is immersed in everyday life, submerged, swallowed up; she never escapes from it, except on the plane of unreality (dreams: fortunetellers, horoscopes, the romantic press, anecdotes and ceremonies on television, etc.)...' (2002, p.51).

Thus, rather than escaping the use of binaries Lefebvre falls back into a problematic usage of them—especially those which are used in conceptualizing and ultimately demarcating gender (and constructed gendered qualities and supposed characteristics). Lefebvre’s discussions of the prototypical figures of ‘transitional man’ and ‘total woman’ are rife with gendered binaries, beginning with the central binary of man: woman, and continues with explicit and implicit invocations of several other related gendered binaries such as masculine: feminine; passive: active; apolitical: political; weak: strong. However, in the following subsection I suggest that this binary itself starts to collapse when one introduces the figure of transformational woman—a figure that emerges by rereading and reinterpreting Lefebvre’s formulation of total woman.

Rereading Lefebvre’s ‘Total Woman’

Lefebvre’s treatment and conceptualization of gender is problematic for many reasons.³¹ Indeed, his discussions of gender do not actually square with the rest of his work. For Lefebvre, the transformation of everyday life becomes possible through ‘critique’ (2008a, pp.xix-xx³², 127; 2002, pp.18-19, 24, 62-63, 70, 130, 226), ‘knowledge’ (2008a, pp.57, 138-175; Lefebvre 2002, pp.98-99, 130, 136, 231, 241-242, 298-299), as well as

³¹ One such reason is the language that Lefebvre uses to describe women. For example, in volume three, he refers to women as ‘society’s rejects’ (along with several other groups of people including ‘the unemployed with no hope of work’ and ‘youth’) (Lefebvre 2008b, p.86). Lefebvre designates women, as well as these other actors as ‘rejects’ because they are ‘expelled outside the main circuits’ of “high tech’ production’ (2008, p.86). However, interestingly, Lefebvre later hints at the transformative potential that these groups—including women—possess (2008b, pp.99-100).

³² Preface to volume one of *Critique of Everyday Life* (ix-xxviii) written by Michel Trebitsch.

experiencing ‘moments’ (Lefebvre 2002, pp.xxii-xxiii,³³ 66, 340-358). In essence, transformation comes from recognizing and confronting the vast ‘contradictions’ of everyday life in relation to modernization (Lefebvre 2008a, pp.66, 134, 182; Lefebvre 2002, pp.50, 66, 208, 241, 298-299). It is here that the missed opportunity for Lefebvre to truly push his conception of gender in relation to everyday life lies. While he acknowledges that women within the space of everyday life were confronted with a situation that was intensely alienating,³⁴ and certainly a situation which would have presented them with many contradictions (Lefebvre 2002, pp.11-12, 51, 210-212, 222-223), he ultimately concludes that women (represented through the figure of the ‘total woman’) would remain largely passive and uncritical in the face of these conditions and contradictions (Lefebvre 2002, p.82). Had Lefebvre pushed his discussions of gender and the everyday to its logical conclusions, based on his larger formulation of the *Critique of Everyday Life*, what we would be left with would be a figure more akin to ‘transformational woman’—critical, questioning and certainly active woman (or at least woman with the potential and possibility for action)—rather than the figure of total woman that he presents us with, who is bereft of any critical capacity or transformational potential (defined squarely in opposition to his ‘transitional man’).

Instead we are mostly left a sense of women as inert, rendered almost motionless by everyday life, unable to be effectively critical or active, despite the myriad reasons—reasons Lefebvre himself alludes to—why they actually should be the most critical and

³³ Preface to volume two of *Critique of Everyday Life* (ix-xxix) written by Michel Tresbitsch.

³⁴ In fact, Lefebvre states that ‘...the alienation of women represents a heightened image of the general alienation of our own specific society...’ (2002, p.211).

the most active. For example, in volume two he suggests the importance of women's 'positionality' (Marchand 2005, p.219) within the everyday by noting that 'women's physiological and social lives place them at the junction between the controlled sector and the uncontrolled sector' (Lefebvre 2002, p.14). Moreover, Lefebvre repeatedly describes (both explicitly and implicitly) women as being the most deeply embedded within the everyday (2002, pp.11-12, 42-43, 51, 82, 222-223), without expanding on, or exploring in any detail the significance of this fact. In light of their unique situatedness within the everyday, Lefebvre should have recognized women as those actors who are potentially most able to recognize, grasp, and confront the myriad contradictions that they are presented within in the everyday. However, he rather frustratingly does not directly or explicitly make this connection. In fact he argues the opposite, asserting that the 'feminine world' is '...without consciousness of the contradictions, so that these contradictions become blunted and weakened...' (Lefebvre 2002, p.84). I aim to demonstrate that we can take various aspects of Lefebvre's work and use them to begin to create a cohesive picture of transformational woman, which both recognizes the critical link between gender and everyday life, and the transformational—albeit potentially latent—possibilities inherent in this link.

Within the context of the feminized transnational call center industry, women workers are invariably confronted with numerous contradictions that stem from their everyday experiences within this work environment (and society, in general), which may prompt them to resist, or seek to create change. For example, they have to face on a daily basis the tension that exists between a company's (or call center's) stated goal of providing

customer service, with the (in many cases, impossible, or nearly impossible) efficiency standards (and broader workplace guidelines) that are attached to their work, which severely undercut the ability of workers to actually help customers.³⁵ On the one hand they are to be the model customer service employee, providing assistance to clients in a friendly and caring manner, while on the other they are pushed to do this work within an often highly competitive and profit driven work environment which undermines their ability to do so (at least to the standard which company's, or customers, would expect). For example, Layla (who conducted telephone surveys for various American companies and organizations) noted being torn between caring for, or helping, customers, and company policies and efficiency goals. She recalls that,

I remember one time, it was with [an American electricity provider], and there was a lady who was on a fixed income. The way they did the power, and the power comes on, or something like that pretty much caused her appliances to blow up. Or, like, things weren't working, or something like that, and she was very upset, and she was explaining, but I couldn't do anything. Like, I would just basically take down the information, verbatim, as she was saying it, pass it on to the power company, and, hoping that they would do something about it. But knowing that probably not, they would just want to see how things go, but, maybe, by luck they would get back to her, but...I felt bad for her, but there's nothing that I could do and it had to, basically get my quota, and you know, not say a word, otherwise the survey would be tampered with (Interview, Layla, 2014).

Gabrielle similarly noted the tension between trying to provide customer service to clients calling in at more than one of the call centers where she worked, and the

³⁵ A similar tension is presented in Forseth's (2005) study of gendered service work within a Norwegian bank. She explains that, 'in many ways the job demands were contradictory and ambivalent. Spending a lot of time on an individual customer in order to be caring and show empathy conflicts with serving the queue as quickly as possible' (Forseth 2005, p.447).

company's policies which actually work against the customer's own best interests. As she explains,

...at [one of the call centers where I worked] it was kind of different because [that company] doesn't care about its customers. Like, at all. Like, you are a number, you pay them, if you don't want to be with them, you can go to another major corporation, which will treat you as badly. So they, they just don't give a crap about their customers. I felt bad because I knew that the policy was in place to screw these people over, and...and you know they would sign on...some salesperson would sign them on to this contract with [one of our products] but wouldn't check to see if they could put [one of these products] in [at their home], right, and then...and then they're stuck in it, like they're stuck, you know. So I felt really bad about that. I felt bad in general because I would always try to find the wiggle room for them if I could, which was one reason why I didn't have as many calls as most other people because I would spend time going to other departments talking to other people, and seeing if I could help these people out, you know, when there was a problem. And...and I felt better about those but there were some where I just knew the policy would just say no and I knew that there was nothing I could do, you know. [...] I felt pretty crappy. You know, it's hard working for a big business when they don't care about their customers because you are informally screwing people over. [...] I worked for this insurance place once and we had to sell, over the phone, we had to sell insurance for people's [credit] cards. The insurance is terrible, nobody should ever buy it, ever, for any reason. It does not cover anything unless you're this tiny little specific group and it takes money from your card every month. And sometimes I felt bad because people legitimately were like "I may lose my job in the next six months I definitely want this!" and I'm thinking "oh Christ, you don't have the money to pay for this! Like, you shouldn't have this, this isn't going to help you," like you know, so it makes you feel terrible. Like it makes you feel like a terrible human being, like, and, and you know that there's nothing you can do personally about it but that you're the one doing it to them (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014).³⁶

³⁶ Gabrielle further touched on the tensions of call center work, noting that, 'it was [important], at one call center I worked for, but it wasn't [an] international [call center] [...] and it's a really big deal and part of their culture that you are a human being that cares. So there was extensive training on how to show you care, how to be sensitive to their needs, all of that stuff. Other than that call center, they didn't really care, they just wanted to get the job done. And generally speaking, even though better quality work [...] includes that, you were often in trouble for spending too much time doing that' (Interview, 2014). John also noted that, '...we would get docked pay if we went over our time. So, we were like, *fiscally and temporally monitored*. It was just...and that was really what made up the most, the bulk of the rumor talking and the, the worry about getting fired at any moment, was that my numbers aren't good, or my...and it wasn't so much

Here, workers may resist or negotiate this contradiction by choosing to act in ways that push back against, and ultimately critique and challenge, the company's profits and policies (as I explore later in chapter five), but which help customers (despite the fact that this did not happen, by and large, in the examples provided above). Also, in general workers within the industry are ideally situated to experience and witness first hand the problematic commodification of their emotions that was first outlined by Hochschild (1983) in her study of the emotional work performed by flight attendants, and which has (not coincidentally) come to be discussed in many studies of teleservice work. From their position within the industry, workers (women workers in particular) can see the ways that existing gendered stereotypes and expectations surrounding emotions have, quite literally, been put to work in the service of capitalism (Stevens 2014, p.9). As Stevens notes, 'emotion itself is a service commodity packaged and sold by the call center industry—a reminder that the standardization of human interactions extends economic rationality to an otherwise social space (Leidner 1993; Scharf 2003; Hochschild 1983)' (2014, p.9). Here workers may decide to resist by 'withdrawing their emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983, p.21; Mulholland 2004, pp.716-717; Stevens 2014, p.9) while on the job. Also, similar to Salzinger's (2003) explorations of the use of gendered worker stereotypes within the Mexican maquiladoras (in that case, the stereotypes used are based largely on

[whether or not] the customer's unsatisfied with the customer service experience, it was more how long the calls take, and how that adds up. That seemed to be the most important thing to the, to management. And that's probably why I didn't like it so much because I...I'm good at customer service and that's the only job I've ever done, is like retail or customer service, right. And, so, I'm pretty good at it, and I couldn't handle it, it was because I was so, like...everybody was so tightly monitored along timelines. So, it was brutal (Interview, John, 2014, emphasis added).

gendered notions of docility)³⁷, workers within the call center (who are presumed to be naturally caring and helpful) are still highly monitored and controlled (Barnes 2004). If the work (and presumably the affinity for such tasks) came so naturally to workers—especially women workers—why is such pervasive control and surveillance necessary? It is because, as Salzinger asserts, ‘understanding that capital *makes* rather than finds such workers, and that gender is implicated in that process, gives us new tools for thinking about how we might challenge the terms under which global production [or, in my case, global service work] takes place’ (2003, p.2, emphasis added). In the very act of resisting (although, especially in resisting by withdrawing emotional labour) women workers undercut the pervasive trope of emotive femininity that the industry is based on. In resisting, women workers effectively challenge the notion that they are naturally suited for (and perhaps more inclined to be content with) such labour, regardless of the conditions under which they are asked to work.

In volume two of the *Critique of Everyday Life*—the same volume in which Lefebvre earlier details the critical conception of total woman—he crucially begins to draw the connection between gender and the everyday and critique (and thus, potential transformation). Here, women are seen as ideally situated to be able to notice the glaring contradictions inherent in everyday life. As Lefebvre explains,

from time immemorial and up to and including the present day, women have been the custodians of a treasure chest of norms and representations. How prosaic and tedious these norms and representations are, but also how tenacious in praxis, and how profound: everything involving the house, the ‘home’ and domesticity, and

³⁷ See Salzinger 2003, pp.1-34.

thus everyday life. At the same time, both symbolically and as conscious ‘subjects’, they embody the loftiest values of art, ethics and culture: love, passions and virtues, beauty, nobility, sacrifice, permanence. But these come into conflict with other supreme values: sensual delight, total pleasure, luxury and lust. These conflicts are profound but disguised, reduced to ambiguity and hidden beneath it, but nevertheless in spite of the mind-numbing nature of housework, women are less likely than men to be stultified by the specialization and fragmentation of labour. So superiority becomes inferiority, inferiority contains the seeds of superiority (although they are reluctant to germinate). *Therefore, women symbolize everyday life in its entirety. They embody its situation, its conflicts and its possibilities. They are its active critique* (2002, pp.222-223, emphasis in original).

In this passage, as well as the epigraph at the beginning of the section, we have an explicitly stated awareness of the direct—and extremely significant—connection that exists between women and everyday life and an awareness that the everyday is, at its heart, a highly gendered space. Lefebvre goes a step beyond his earlier formulation of ‘total woman’ by outlining what it is about women and their relation to everyday life that makes them potentially more capable of being an ‘active critic’ of everyday life—albeit the language he chooses to use to refer to women is rather problematic. In fact, read generously, we can see glimpses of transformational woman in this passage—however, this conception of women as ‘active critics’ is fleeting and ultimately not sustained (and again, his conception of women’s roles in society is troubling), which leads it to being rather disappointingly underdeveloped.

Kristin Ross, who relies heavily on Lefebvre’s work on the everyday, points to the profound connection between gender and the everyday. She asserts that ‘women, of course, as the primary victims and arbiters of social reproduction, as the subjects of everydayness and as those most subjected to it, as the class of people most responsible for

consumption, and those responsible for the complex movement whereby the social existence of human beings is produced and reproduced, *are* the everyday: its managers, its embodiment' (1995, p.77, emphasis in original). By depicting women as both the 'administrator[s] and victim[s]' (Ross 1995, p.78) of the everyday, she acknowledges that they are the actors most embedded in it, and therefore, following from Lefebvre, potentially the most able to glimpse its many contradictions and problematic aspects. However, much like in Lefebvre's own work, the connections between gender, the everyday, and *potential* transformation are not explored in any direct or sustained manner by Ross.³⁸

However, here it is important to recognize and acknowledge that other feminist scholars have highlighted, and theorized in greater depth, the connection between women's unique positionality within the everyday (given their role as 'the administrators' of the everyday (Ross 1995, p.78) because of the social reproductive labour they undertake on a daily basis), and the critical and political thought (and resistance) that work potentially gives rise to. In particular, Sara Ruddick's work on 'maternal thinking' explicitly spells out this link (Ruddick 1989; Ruddick 2004; Ruddick 2009; Robinson and Confortini 2013). As Robinson and Confortini explain, 'not only did [Ruddick] dare to suggest that the practices of mothering may give rise to a certain kind of moral thinking, she sought to turn that thinking to political use' (2013, p.38). They continue, noting that, 'the struggle

³⁸ For example, see (Lefebvre 2002, p.82), where he states 'the total woman becomes everything because she does everything. She produces and directs consumption. She has children, she brings them up and educates them. She governs the family. She allows men to devote themselves to sterile games: politics, war, feelings, intellect. And yet artists create for her, woman, and about her.' Here the connections between gender, the everyday, and transformation remain unexamined and unexplored.

[with maternal thinking] is not only internal; it is a struggle to ferret out the meaning of dominant values and ask whose interests they serve and how they affect her children (Ruddick 1995: 237-238). In this sense, mothers are uniquely positioned in society to resist—to be “disloyal to the civilization” that depends on them (Ruddick, 1995: 225)’ (Robinson and Confortini 2013, p.41). Indeed, through Ruddick’s work the mother as political actor and thinker is ascribed a great deal of power to potentially create change and transformation—a power not afforded to women (at least not explicitly) in Lefebvre’s or Ross’ work. As Ruddick herself asserts,

I do not think maternal thinking, any more than the standpoint of which it is part, represents a True or Total discourse. Nor are mothers, any more than other women, the quintessential revolutionary subjects. It is enough to say that there is a peacefulness latent in maternal practice and that a transformed maternal thinking could make a distinctive contribution to peace politics. Given the violence we live in and the disasters that threaten us, enough seems a feast (2004, p.166).

One of the major impetuses behind the detailed gender analysis of Lefebvre’s work that I have undertaken in this section (aside from wanting to explore in some depth the work of one of the foundational thinkers of the ‘everyday life’ version of Everyday IPE) was to reclaim and piece together the threads in his work that point (although not explicitly argued, or stated, as such) to women’s important (and unique) role in potentially creating change and transformation within society.

The argument that women’s unique positionality within society may provide them with the ability to better see contradictions (to use Lefebvre’s language) and thus, potentially create change, is in fact a central aspect of ‘feminist standpoint’ theory (Campbell and

Wasco 2000, p.781), which Ruddick's work on maternal thinking builds on.³⁹ As Campbell and Wasco explain,

by living out their lives in both the dominant culture and in their own culture, members of stigmatized groups can develop a type of double vision, and hence a more comprehensive understanding of social reality (Hartstock, 1987, 1998; Westcott, 1990). The standpoint, however, must be *developed* by appropriating one's experiences through intellectual and political struggles against gender, race, class, and sexual orientation inequalities (Allen & Baber, 1992; Collins, 1987, 1989; Harding, 1987; Hartstock, 1987, 1998). The location of oppressed groups *vis-à-vis* their oppressors creates the *potential* for critical social analysis, but such a standpoint only emerges through consciousness raising experiences (2000, pp. 781-782, emphasis in original).

Thus, in reclaiming elements of Lefebvre's in-depth analysis of everyday life—which spanned several decades—that explore these connections, we are able to create an even richer picture of how gender matters within everyday life, and further, how change might arise from people's (in particular, women's) everyday experiences, in line with the work of feminist standpoint theorists.⁴⁰

In volume three, Lefebvre alludes to the fact that women's unique situatedness within the everyday may allow them a greater chance of witnessing and recognizing the contradictions that permeate everyday life. In regard to women's 'magazines and

³⁹ However, as Ruddick explains, 'although I count myself among standpoint theorists, I do not take the final step that some appear to take of claiming for one standpoint a Truth that is exhaustive and absolute. Epistemologically, I continue to believe that all reasons are tested by the practices from which they arise; hence justifications end in the commitments with which they begin. Although I envision a world organized by the values of caring labor, I cannot identify the grounds, reason, or god that would legitimate that vision' (2004, pp.164-165).

⁴⁰ In some ways, the FEPGE represents what Bakker (2007, p. 551) refers to as 'the everyday standpoint.'

weeklies' and their role in the increasing presence of a 'management technique' in everyday life, he notes that they '...work out complete daily schedules—buying and selling, shopping, menus, clothing. From morning to evening and evening to morning, everyday time is full to bursting: fulfillment, plentitude. With 'values'—femininity, virility, or seductiveness—but above all with the ultimate value: satisfaction' (Lefebvre 2008b, p.81). The next part of this discussion is where the transformational potential of women comes to the fore. Lefebvre continues, asserting that 'being satisfied: this is the general model of being and living whose promoters and supporters do not appreciate the fact that it generates discontent' (Lefebvre 2008b, p.81). Thus we see the seeds of potential discontent, and therefore the potential for transformation, presented within the very material—the 'women's press' (which such magazines and weeklies can be included within)—that Lefebvre himself condemns in volume two (2002, pp.80-87).

Another example of the intimate connections between gender, the everyday, and transformation within Lefebvre's work comes not from his *Critique of Everyday Life* trilogy, but rather from *The Production of Space*. For Lefebvre, the transformation of everyday life and the transformation of space were intimately related projects. As he explains, 'the creation (or production) of a planet-wide space as the social foundation of a transformed everyday life open to myriad possibilities—such is the dawn now beginning to break on the far horizon' (Lefebvre 1991, p.422). Within this text we see an explicit recognition of the potentially transformational power of women, however, as with his other texts, this is a fleeting and conceptually underdeveloped recognition. In the final chapter of the book, in which Lefebvre discusses the possible 'transformation of society'

by way of ‘a collective ownership and management of space’ (1991, p.422), he describes the current highly gendered spatial situation in relation to an equally gendered potential solution:

the masculine virtues which gave rise to domination by this space can only lead, as we are only too well aware, to a generalized state of deprivation: from ‘private’ property to the Great Castration. It is inevitable in these circumstances that feminine revolts should occur, that the female principle should seek revenge. Were such a movement to take the form of a feminine ‘racism,’ which merely inverted the masculine version, it would be a pity. Is a final metamorphosis called for that will reverse all earlier ones, destroying earlier ones, destroying phallic space and replacing it with a ‘uterine’ space? (Lefebvre 1991, p.410).

Here we are presented with women and the feminine as being deeply embedded in the image and formulation of transformation—albeit a potentially problematic transformation. He asserts that such a ‘feminine’ transformation ‘...in itself will not ensure the invention of a truly appropriated space, or that of an architecture of joy and enjoyment,’ however, it is telling that we once again find gender and transformation being profoundly linked in Lefebvre’s work (Lefebvre 1991, p.410). The transformational figure is presented in female form.

However, it is important to note in attempting to reread Lefebvre’s work in order to better grasp the connections between gender, the everyday, and transformation that, that for the most part, lay dormant within his writings, one must confront the very real fact that Lefebvre himself explicitly depicts women, and their relation to potential transformation, in troubling ways. For example, volume three also includes a problematic discussion of the ‘women’s movements.’ He states ‘...their demands transform neither the everyday, nor the mode of production; they are, for example, content to improve the division of

labour at the level of everyday life' (2008b, p.161, see also pp.104-105). Through their depiction as ultimately 'reformist' (Lefebvre 2008b, p.161), we can squarely situate this reading of the women's movement within his conception of 'total woman.' However, as the other material drawn from his work suggests, this clearly expressed negative image of women in relation to transformation actually conflicts with the more subtle—although highly significant—picture of women that lies under the surface of his work, which allows the connections between gender, the everyday, and transformation to be read in a much more positive light.

The examples discussed above suggest that while on the surface Lefebvre gives us a negative picture of women in relation to the everyday, he rather curiously also provides us the material—in combination with existing feminist scholarship—from which to begin constructing a much more positive and transformational depiction of the relationship between women and the everyday. Rather than the apolitical character presented in Lefebvre's outline of the total woman, the above examples present an image of a figure, who, in light of her unique position within the everyday, is better able to glimpse its myriad contradictions, and is thus better positioned to be an agent of potential transformation and change. From this, we can reread Lefebvre's original formulation of total woman as transformational woman, using the limited material that he presents throughout his texts on the connections between gender, the everyday, and transformation. In light of this rereading, instead of being 'reformist,' 'apolitical,' and 'confused' women are repositioned as the potential authors of social change (Lefebvre 2002, p.82).

In this sense, transformational woman can be read as the ‘third’ aspect of a Lefebvrian ‘triad’ (1991, p.39)—the presence of the possible, although by no-means guaranteed, transition or transformation. It is here we see the gendered binary presented by Lefebvre—that of transitional man versus total woman—in the first two volumes of *The Critique of Everyday Life* start to disintegrate, and instead a more dialectal vision of the transformational (and highly gendered) actor begins to emerge. The triadic figure of transformation, roughly represented as inertia—transition—*potential* transformation, which surfaces not only allows for a more nuanced understanding of the transformational process as formulated by Lefebvre, but it also allows the gendered nature of resistance and transformation (whether of the everyday, or of ‘abstract space’⁴¹) to importantly be brought to light.

Conclusion

It has been my aim with this section to provide a gendered analysis of Henri Lefebvre’s influential three volume *Critique of Everyday Life*, and to explore its importance for feminist IPE scholars interested in studying the global political economy from an everyday perspective (and in turn, outline the importance of his work for my own research, which aims to explore the complex connections between the everyday, gender, and the global economy). In revisiting and rereading Lefebvre’s writings on the everyday, one can see that women were of a central importance in his theoretical conceptions of

⁴¹ See Lefebvre 1991, pp.63 and 411.

resistance and transformation even though the initial image of total woman presented in volume two belies this fact. When Lefebvre's work is subjected to a deeper reading on the question of gender—in particular, the question of what role, if any women were to play in the social changes he was envisioning, and indeed calling for—one can see glimpses of a latent and ultimately unexplored significance that Lefebvre seems to accord to women and the role that they would play in these changes. However, capturing this significance is only possible if one makes the move from total to transformational woman, and if this figure is read as part of a dialectic in relation to the figures of transitional man and total woman.

Thus, Lefebvre's work holds the potential to offer great insight into the relationships between gender, the everyday, and the international, and is therefore worth greater attention by feminist 'Everyday' IPE scholars. Lefebvre's account of gender and everyday life, when subjected to a deeper reading, reveals the critical importance that gender plays in everyday life, and further, the role gender plays in potential change and transformation. By incorporating his work into feminist 'Everyday IPE' analyses one is able to better grasp the ways in which gender matters within everyday life, and further, the significance of this to the international sphere. Although, once again, this call for increased consideration of Lefebvre's work by feminist scholars of the everyday must also be tempered by an acknowledgement and appreciation that his conception of gender and everyday life was not unproblematic. Nevertheless his work represents a valuable (albeit underutilized) theoretical resource for feminist 'Everyday' IPE scholars. In the next section, I turn to an examination of the roots of the other category of Everyday IPE

identified by Hobson and Seabrooke, the ‘everyday politics’ approach (2010, p.290). While Lefebvre’s work (and indeed the ‘everyday life’ literature more generally) has a great deal to offer feminist scholars interested in better understanding the connections between gender, everyday life, and the global economy, as argued throughout this section, it is the ‘everyday politics’ approach which serves as the basis of my analysis throughout the remainder of the dissertation (and indeed centrally informs the FEPGE approach which I present later in chapter two) given my central focus on everyday forms of resistance within the transnational call center industry.

1.2 Gender, Resistance, and Everyday Politics: James C. Scott and Beyond

‘Everyday forms of resistance rarely make headlines. But just as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, thousands upon thousands of petty act of insubordination and evasion create a political and economic barrier reef of their own. And whenever, to pursue the simile, the ship of state runs aground on such a reef, attention is typically directed to the shipwreck itself and not the vast aggregation of actions which make it possible.’

—James C. Scott, 1989, p.49.

As noted in the previous section, Henri Lefebvre’s work on everyday life has served as a guiding influence for the ‘everyday life’ school of Everyday IPE. In this section, I will explore James C. Scott’s work on ‘everyday forms of resistance,’ which has also been influential for the ‘everyday politics’ school of Everyday IPE (which serves as the basis of my theoretical approach in this dissertation) identified by Hobson and Seabrooke (2010, p.290). With the publication of Scott’s *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of*

Peasant Resistance in 1985⁴², a debate began to emerge which centered around discussions over what should, or should not, be recognized as resistance—a debate the foundations of which can be traced much farther back to Karl Marx’s writings on worker resistance. Scott, and those who were influenced by his work, argue that it is of the utmost importance to look at ‘everyday’ forms of resistance as they hold significance for those undertaking them; furthermore, they enable more collective, large-scale actions to be situated within a broader landscape of resistance (Scott 1993). In contrast, many of the (primarily neo-Marxist) scholars who later reacted to his work, argued against placing importance on these acts as they served as dangerous ‘safety-valves’ for worker discontent, and as such did not pose a challenge to capitalist production itself (El-Kholy 2002; Murphy 1998). In this section I outline the main arguments presented by Scott, the criticisms to which his work has been subject, as well as the subsequent gendered interpretations of his work that have been presented. I also explore the work of several authors—both those who have made explicit attempts to build on the Scott’s work, and those who have indirectly done so—who have brought to light the importance of focusing on gender and the ‘everyday’ in broader discussions of resistance. Overall, this section serves to set the stage for arguments that I will be presenting in later chapters outlining the ‘feminization’ of worker resistance within the transnational call center industry, as

⁴² Although *Weapons of the Weak* represented Scott’s first explicit articulation and examination of ‘everyday forms of resistance,’ his interest in everyday acts of peasant resistance can be evidenced in his earlier book *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, published in 1976 (Gutmann 1993b, p.75). As Gutmann explains, in this earlier work, ‘...he sought to contrast rebellion and unrest with alternatives to popular forms of struggle...he was concerned with predicting future forms of covert and overt rebellion (resistance was not yet a key word for him) among the Malay Peasantry’ (ibid). Further, ‘in his research, he was directly following Thompson’s “Moral Economy of the English Crowd (1971)...”’ (ibid).

well as the broader discussions of the importance of gender and the everyday in analyses of the international which serve as the foundation of this dissertation.

In *Weapons of the Weak* Scott put forward a radically different way of studying the resistance practices of subordinate members of society. Based on his study of the Malaysian peasantry in the 1970s, he argued that resistance to existing power structures happened on a daily basis. Scott evidenced that a constant struggle was being played out between the powerful and those viewed as powerless, in which the supposedly powerless would find inventive ways (such as ‘footdragging, false compliance, pilfering, slander, and sabotage’) to gain some form of control over their lives (Scott 1985, p.32).⁴³ These acts were termed ‘everyday acts resistance’ by Scott due to the fact that they were undertaken as part of the everyday struggles of the subordinate members of society against the dominant. Kerkvliet has argued that, in general, ‘studies of peasant societies [such as Scott’s] have helped to change the conventional perception of politics by demonstrating and analysing the significance of everyday politics for villagers’ (2009, p.231).

⁴³ Allan Wade—who explicitly utilizes Scott’s formulation of resistance in studying forms of resistance used by women who have been subject to various forms of physical and emotional abuse—offers an interesting comparison between the view of these forms of action as ‘everyday forms of resistance’ versus ‘small acts of living,’ as outlined by Erving Goffman in his 1961 book *Asylums* (1997, p.32). He explains that on one level, Goffman’s description is correct; everyday acts such as ‘parody, lying, withdrawn muteness, feigned ignorance, thinly veiled contempt, muttering, or a credibly performed deferential bow’ are indeed ‘small’ actions (1997, p.32). However, on another level, Wade highlights that ‘the phrase is oxymoronic,’ asserting that ‘in a context of violence or oppression, where any act of self-assertion may be met with brutal reprisals, there is no such thing as a “small” act of living. Any act of resistance in such circumstances is inherently and profoundly significant, regardless of what it may appear to have accomplished’ (ibid). Tilly also offers a discussion of Scott’s work in relation to Goffman’s (1991, p.597).

Scott's theorization of resistance challenged much of the work previously conducted on resistance, as it put small acts of resistance front and center, instead of solely focusing on overt, collective, and thus readily visible forms of resistance, such as 'riots, rebellions, revolutionary movements' (Scott 1989, p.33). For Scott, recognition of these smaller, hidden acts of resistance was of the utmost importance because '...there is a politics of daily resistance in practice, speech and thought that persists whether or not there are mass movements or rebellions and without which mass movements and rebellions cannot be understood' (Scott 1993, p.94). Thus, contrary to the claims put forward by his critics, his work does not ignore overt forms of resistance, such as rebellion.⁴⁴ Rather, he seeks to recognize and understand everyday resistance as part of a broad 'spectrum of resistance,' which took full account of both overt and hidden forms of resistance (Tripp 1997, p.5; Scott 1993, p.93). Kerkvliet draws on Scott's argument in his study of the 'everyday politics'⁴⁵ of both peasants in the Philippines, as well as Vietnam during the 1970s and

⁴⁴ The most notable proponent of this viewpoint is Matthew Gutmann (1993a; 1993b), who expressed concern in this article (published in a 1993 volume of *Latin American Perspectives*) over scholars using Scott's framework to study Latin American case studies that, as he notes, had 'been marked by a variety of popular protests and struggles' (p.81). This is because Gutmann took Scott to be arguing for a sole focus on everyday forms of resistance, which he feared would lead to overt, collective forms of resistance being overlooked (p.75). Scott offered a reply to these charges—published in the same volume—in which he strongly defended the need to consider everyday forms of resistance, especially in order to understand larger, overt actions (1993,p.94). Gutmann (1993b) offered a rejoinder to Scott's comments, in which he appeared to be little swayed by his reply. Scott was himself not pleased by the manner in which Gutmann had gone about attacking his work, stating (in the 'Reply'), 'there is something about the tone of [his] critique that offends my sense of professional standards...how obtuse and small spirited [he] is to have authored such a lame critique' (1993, p.94). And given Gutmann's stark misreading of Scott's work, his displeasure seems warranted.

⁴⁵ 'Everyday politics,' as defined by Kerkvliet, '...involves people embracing, complying with, adjusting, and contesting norms and rules regarding authority over, production of,

1980s. In his study, Kerkvliet demonstrates that much of the political activity which occurred within the small village of San Ricardo in the Philippines during this time was of an ‘everyday’ nature, and by only focusing on larger, more ‘conventional’ forms of political action, observers risked missing the bulk of political activity that was taking place (2009, p.230). Thus, in line with Scott, he argues that, ‘...being unaware of that would seriously handicap anyone trying to understand the occasional times when political issues and activities suddenly became public and organized’ (Kerkvliet 2009, p. 230). This crucial point made has also been made by Cynthia Enloe in her analysis of how IR scholars often ‘*underestimat[e]* the amounts and varieties of power’ involved in relationships between states (2004, p.19, emphasis in original). She argues that when scholars do not adequately address and analyze the actions of those viewed to be at the ‘margins’ of International Relations, they risk being ‘caught by surprise’ (Enloe 2004, pp. 23-24).

Kerkvliet’s analysis of the changes in farming policies within Vietnam during the same time period similarly support Scott’s claims that ‘everyday’ forms of action can have a great impact on regional, even national policies (Kerkvliet 2009, p.231; Scott 1985, pp.

or allocation of resources and doing so in quiet, mundane, and subtle expressions and acts that are rarely organized or direct’ (2009, p.232). He differentiates ‘everyday politics’ from other forms of politics, mainly, ‘official politics’ and ‘advocacy politics’ (Kerkvliet 2009, pp. 232-233). He also provides a typology of four—what he views as different and distinct—forms of ‘everyday politics’ (2009, pp. 233-240). These forms of everyday politics include: ‘support, compliance, modifications and evasions, and resistance’ (2009, p.233). While his categorizations are useful for the purposes of his study, the boundaries he draws between these apparently different forms of everyday action in many cases overlap in ways that begin to completely break down, or at the very least blur, the lines between them. In particular, his distinctions between ‘everyday resistance’ and ‘everyday modifications and evasions’ are problematic (see 2009, p.237).

36-37; Scott 1989, pp. 43-46). As he details, peasants in the Red River Delta, ‘the heartland of socialist Vietnam,’ caused major state agricultural policy changes, pressuring the state to move away from collective farming toward allowing forms of family farming (Kerkvliet 2009, p.231). He explains that this shift was largely a result of the fact that the ‘everyday politics put collective farming, authorities, and policy under enormous strain’ (Kerkvliet 2009, p.231).

Scott’s theorization of ‘everyday’ resistance was further elaborated in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, published in 1990, in which he introduced the concept of ‘hidden transcripts,’ a term he used to refer to actions on the part of the subordinate which were meant to evade the attention of the dominant (Scott 1990; Mittelman and Chin 2005, p.22). As Gutmann (1993b, p.79) explains, ‘[in this book] Scott extends his theory (now called ‘infrapolitics’) to apply to all subordinate groups, rural and urban, who dare not speak their own name.’⁴⁶ In his account of ‘infrapolitics’ Scott argued that by contrasting ‘hidden transcripts’ with the visible ‘public transcripts’ (defined as the elite-perception of ‘superior-subordinate relations’ which saw the subordinate as fully conforming to their expectations), it allows for the ways in which these covert actions challenge the ‘practices

⁴⁶ While Scott’s work focused on the everyday acts of resistance undertaken by peasants in several historical and cultural contexts, I aim to show that this theoretical framework of resistance can tell us a great deal about resistance by workers within capitalist systems of production, especially those who are part of transnationally situated workforces. Kerkvliet has previously asserted that ‘the concept of everyday resistance...travels well when studying political behavior and views of people in other sectors of society, not just peasants, who are in relatively weak subordinate positions’ (2009, p.234). Authors, such as Eckstein (1989), have similarly extended Scott’s work by applying it to ‘other economically subordinate groups’ (Gutmann 1993b, p.74). See also Smyth and Grijn’s (1997) study for an example of how Scott’s work has been applied to workers within a capitalist system of production.

of economic status, and ideological domination' to become visible (Mittelman and Chin 2005, p.22). Thus for Scott, these hidden forms of resistance, which were purposively concealed from the dominant by the subordinate represented extremely political forms of action. In fact he asserts that, 'infrapolitics may be thought of as the elementary—in the sense of foundational—form of politics...under the conditions of tyranny and persecution which most historical subjects live, it *is* political life' (Scott cited in Gutmann 1993b, p.81, emphasis in original). As Charles Tilly explains, Scott's formulation of resistance became particularly useful to researchers because '...it had a double attraction: it dealt with everyday life rather than concentrating on rare moments of concerted action and it justified the examination of groups who superficially acquiesced in their master's demands instead of rebelling' (1991, p.596).

Scott's theoretical arguments surrounding resistance—mainly his assertion that 'everyday' acts were central to any consideration of how subordinate members of society resist—did not go unchallenged. The challenges to this model came primarily from Marxist scholars. As El-Kholy notes, several neo-Marxist scholars set about contrasting the acts undertaken by the workers in Scott's work, with those that they deemed as acts of 'real' resistance (2002, p.16). This differentiation between 'real' resistance and that of the 'everyday' variety (such as those acts highlighted and analyzed by Scott) was based upon Marx's clear statements about what could, and thus what could not, be considered 'real' resistance. As Jermier et. al note, "'real' resistance in and around capitalist work organizations could take many forms, but would derive from only one source: revolutionary class-consciousness' (1994, p.2). Thus, for any action on the part of

workers to be considered resistance, it would need to contain this element. Further, from Marx's perspective, due to the collective nature of exploitation, the only way to overcome this would be through a collective response (Jermier et. al 1994, pp.2-3).⁴⁷ For Marx, 'to overcome alienation [workers] must abolish private ownership of production which involves building labour solidarity and engaging in class-based resistance' (Jermier et. al 1994, p.3). Thus, anything short of collective action associated with a revolutionary class-consciousness could not legitimately be seen as an act of resistance to capitalism.⁴⁸ Worker resistance under the Marxist formulation needed to be aimed towards overthrow the capitalist system of production, and again, needed to transcend the individual level of action.

Scott was very critical of the 'structuralist variants of neo-Marxism' for what he viewed as their complete disregard for the role of individual actions and agency (1985, p.42).

This marks a major underlying ontological difference between Scott's work and that of the structuralist neo-Marxists: one focused on individuals or agents and the other, almost solely on structure. Scott's work was very much influenced by the work of E.P.

Thompson in this regard, who had envisioned the process of class formation as being

⁴⁷ Interestingly, Jermier et. al note that Marx documented in *Capital* several instances of 'resistance practices' which lacked the necessary qualities to be considered 'real' resistance, showing an awareness to everyday acts of resistance—in the nature of Scott's formulations (1994, p.4). However, he did not address them in any substantial way for that very reason. As Jermier et al. explain, '...he did not connect these incidents to class-conscious revolutionary action, nor did he use them to develop a theory of everyday resistance to capitalist domination... [he did not feel the need to] elaborate on the meaning of resistance by alienated ('falsely conscious') subjects' (ibid).

⁴⁸ Scott (1989, p.51) discusses the work of Eric Hobsbawm and Eugene Genovese as examples of scholars that see everyday resistance as 'coping mechanisms,' which at best could be considered 'pre-political' acts, and who viewed 'real' resistance as resistance which contained revolutionary aims.

something that developed from the people themselves (Scott 1985, p.42). Thompson explains that ‘the process of class formation is a process of self-making, although under certain conditions which are given’ (cited in Scott 1985, p.42). Scott, in complete agreement, notes that ‘How else can a mode of production affect the nature of class relations except as mediated by human experience and interpretation?... To omit the experience of human agents from the analysis of class relations is to have theory swallow its own tail’ (Scott 1985, p.42). Thus, unlike the structuralist neo-Marxist formulation, Scott saw class relations as being very much an outgrowth of people’s everyday lived experiences and understandings. And further, these experiences and understandings serve to shape what forms of resistance people would undertake, and who would be the targeted. As Scott explains,

...all historical resistance by subordinate classes begins: close to the ground, rooted firmly in the homely but meaningful realities of daily experience. The *enemies* are not impersonal historical forces but real people. That is, they are seen as actors responsible for their own actions and not as bearers of abstractions...The *goals* of resistance are as modest as its values. The poor strive to gain work, land, and income; they are not aiming at large historical abstractions such as socialism, let alone Marxist-Leninism. The *means* typically employed to achieve these ends—barring the rare crises that might precipitate larger dreams—are both prudent and realistic (1985, p.348, emphasis in original).

Again, for Scott, the target for action—and thus potential change—is not the abstract system of capitalism itself, but rather, the superiors that people interacted with on a daily basis.⁴⁹ For the structural Marxists, change was necessarily revolutionary and meant to

⁴⁹ This is because, as Scott argues, ‘...people experience deprivation and oppression within a concrete setting, not as the end product of large and abstract processes, and it is the concrete experience that molds their discontent into specific grievances against specific targets. Workers experience the factory, the speeding rhythm of the assembly

overthrow the system of capitalism. However, for Scott, although he contends that everyday acts may ‘contribute to revolutionary outcomes,’ the revolutionary impetus is certainly not requirement for undertaking (or considering certain types of individual action) resistance (1985, p.349).

Here Scott’s account of resistance can be contrasted with the arguments put forth by Michael Burawoy in *Manufacturing Consent* (1979). Building on the work of Donald Roy, Burawoy observed the everyday work relations among workers employed in an ‘engine division of a multinational corporation’ (1979, p.33), with a specific interest in investigating how ‘conflict and consent are organized on the shop floor’ (1979, p.4). Burawoy argued that manifestations of conflict and consent ‘must be grasped in terms of the organization of the labor process under capitalism’ (1979, p.12). He noted that within this workplace, work was organized and structured as a game—referred to as ‘making out’ (Burawoy, 1979, p.51)—which ‘contributes to the ‘obscuring and securing of surplus value’ (1979, p.92). He argued that by participating in these games workers consent to their exploitation (Burawoy 1979, p.199), and within this game any potential space for autonomous action and agency (i.e. output restriction) is confined by management and tolerated only to the extent that it does not threaten profits (Burawoy, pp. 58; 80-81; 199). Further, these games result in a ‘redistribution of conflict’ from a hierarchical orientation (i.e. between workers and management) to a ‘lateral’ orientation (i.e. between workers themselves), which further serves to maintain the organization of labour (Burawoy 1979, p.67). Thus, for Burawoy, the everyday actions of workers—even those which might

line, the foreman, the spies, the guards, the owner, and the paycheck. *They do not experience monopoly capitalism*’ (Scott 1985, p.43, emphasis in original).

appear to be ‘resistance’—mostly serve to reproduce rather than challenge the capitalist system of production, except at times of ‘crisis,’ when the game’s existence may not be inevitable (Burawoy 1979, pp.86-87) and ideological change could potentially occur (1979, p.157).

For Burawoy, as well as for many other scholars interested in the actions of workers, the acts of ‘resistance’ highlighted by Scott would not be considered real resistance; in fact, they could—and perhaps should—be viewed as dangerous for the long run well-being of the workers undertaking them (El-Kholy 2002,p.16). These acts were viewed as ‘dangerous’ because they could prevent workers from actually seeing—and thus confronting—their oppression by acting as a ‘safety-valve’ for worker discontent, whereby workers would let off a bit of steam, without ever challenging the overall economic system that exploited them (El-Kholy 2002, p.16). As Hodson observes, many scholars have ‘seemed to reason from the existence of capitalism backwards: since capitalism continues to exist, workers must not be resisting enough’ (1995, 82). Any actions that were not viewed as openly challenging capitalism were often relegated to the category of mere ‘coping strategies’ (El-Kholy 2002, p.16).

In his earlier work, Scott argued that ‘everyday’ acts of resistance, while usually undertaken at the individual level, actually could be conceptualized as a form of collective action (1989, pp.33-4). For Scott, acts of everyday resistance represented ‘the ordinary means of class struggle’ in situations where open resistance and rebellion was not an option (1989, p.34). Further, when everyday acts of resistance were undertaken by

many members of a subordinate group or class (in an uncoordinated, or planned way), they ‘may have aggregate consequences all out of proportion to their banality when considered singly...[therefore] no adequate account of class relations is possible without addressing their importance’ (Scott 1989, p.34).⁵⁰ And even though these acts of resistance were undertaken by individuals, without the requirement of coordination among other individuals, they undoubtedly relied on a ‘venerable popular culture of resistance to accomplish their ends’ (Scott 1989, p.35; Sivaramkrishnan 2005, p.347).⁵¹ This points to the collective nature of what is conceived of by Scott as individual resistance.

Furthermore, Scott argues that everyday acts of resistance, while seeking individual gains, should not be automatically discounted as not being a manifestation of class conflict. He did offer one very important qualification to this point however; while individuals may undertake resistance for individual gains, those gains must not be at the expense of others in their class.⁵² Following from this, he strongly asserts ‘most forms of everyday

⁵⁰ As Scott (1989, p.36, emphasis in original) notes: ‘The disposition of scarce resources is surely what is at stake in any conflict between classes. When it is a question of a few poachers, arsonists, or deserters, their actions are of little moment for class conflict. When, however, such activities become sufficiently generalized to become a *pattern* of resistance, their relevance to class conflict is clear.’

⁵¹ Interestingly, Scott further notes that ‘seen in the light of a supportive subculture and the knowledge that the risk to any single resister is generally reduced to the extent that that the whole community is involved, it becomes plausible to speak of a social movement. Curiously, however, it is a social movement with no formal organization, no formal leaders, no manifestoes, no dues, and no banner’ (1985, p.35).

⁵² However, the findings from Camp’s study of the forms of everyday resistance practices used by slaves in Antebellum America in some ways challenge this assertion. As she details, when female slaves would leave plantations—usually on a temporary basis—the work that they left behind would still have to be done by someone, either by another

resistance are, after all, deployed precisely to thwart some appropriation by superior classes and/or the state' (Scott 1989, p.36). Therefore, given the underlying collective aspects of everyday resistance, it becomes possible—and indeed necessary—to problematize the strict line drawn by many of Scott's critics between resistance of the 'real' and 'everyday' varieties.

As Jermier et. al argue, making a distinction between 'real' and 'everyday' resistance on the basis of class consciousness can be extremely dangerous as it can serve to depict those not undertaking forms of overt and collective resistance as 'dopes' (1994, p.5). As Scott's formulation of 'hidden' and 'public transcripts' demonstrates, just because subjects do not publicly appear to be resisting or rebelling against the existing order does not mean that they are not consciously challenging domination in a covert manner (Mittelman and Chin 2005, p.22). Sivaramkrishnan (2005) notes that in doing so, Scott's work offered a 'comprehensive rejection of false consciousness and the attempts [of other scholars] to infer ideological persuasion of the poor from observed acts of compliance' (p.348). This has led scholars of resistance—building on the foundations laid by Scott—to call for scholars to look more closely at acts by workers that appear on the surface as compliance. As Jermier et al. explain, 'this is because cooperation often conceals aspects of resistance that, while not a direct threat to capitalism, can change working practices in significant ways and possibly expand the space through which labor effects the conditions of its own reproduction' (1994, pp.5-6).

female slave (i.e. someone from their own class), or in other cases by 'slave-holding' women (2002, p.12).

As Hodson (1995, p.102) argues, by looking at a larger scope of worker resistance (including acts of everyday resistance) we can begin to overcome the continued debate about what does and does not constitute ‘true class struggle.’ This is because

...we need have no teleology about the future direction of society in order to observe worker resistance, measure its correlates and model its causes and consequences... without such a teleology, implications of worker resistance oriented toward regulating the amount of work for reproducing, limiting and altering relations of production become a more open question (Hodson 1995, p.102-3).

The need to broaden what gets included as resistance and ‘true class struggle’⁵³ in literature on worker resistance was certainly a key factor in Scott’s work. However, as demonstrated above, there is still a divide between scholars of worker resistance. This continued schism can largely be attributed to a rejection on the part of the ‘real’ resistance scholars to any broadening of what can be deemed class struggle, preferring instead to maintain a purist account of worker resistance. These scholars’ teleological conception of resistance ‘sorts’ acts of worker resistance between those that are ‘significant and insignificant for arriving at a given destination’ (Hodson 1995, p.103). This conception of resistance can importantly serve to blind scholars to smaller forms of resistance and their importance for those who are resisting. It is because of this that Thomas and Davies (2005a, p.701), in line with Hodson, suggest that ‘we [need to] question the need for a utopian narrative of emancipation, valuing small pockets of resistance that sound a liberatory note (Bartky 1988) and make a difference to how people live their lives and live with themselves.’

⁵³ Although, Thomas and Davies (2005b, p.712) highlight that one must avoid having ‘...the antecedents of resistance...laid exclusively at the feet of class struggle, [as] other expressions of oppression such as race, gender and ethnicity and sexuality are excluded [by doing so].’

El-Kholy has noted that, at its heart, the debate within studies of worker resistance is primarily centered around two issues: the intentions and motivations of those undertaking the acts in question, as well as the consequences that these actions ended up having for both the workers and employers involved (2002, p.16). In regard to intentions of the actors involved, El-Kholy notes that acts of 'resistance' were differentiated on the basis of whether they were motivated by 'subjective, self-indulgent, and self-interested' goals, or motivated by 'objective, selfless, and principled' aims (2002, p.16). According to the Marxist conception of resistance, only those acts that were motivated by the latter set of intentions could be seen as valid and thus constitute 'real' resistance, whereas those that were seemingly motivated by the former set of intentions (which were often ascribed to the subjects in Scott's work) would not be. The second defining characteristic of this debate centered on the actual consequences of the acts of resistance. Here the dispute was over what could rightfully be called resistance as opposed to actions that some viewed as no more than 'daily survival strategies' (El-Kholy 2002, p.16).

Hollander and Einwohner (2004, p.533) similarly note that the continued debate around the subject of resistance has centered around two issues: recognition and intention. In regard to recognition, the authors note that the primary question to be addressed by scholars of resistance is 'must oppositional action be readily apparent to others, and must it in fact be recognized as resistance?' (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.539). As the authors assert, accounts of resistance, such as those provided by Scott and those who have utilized his theoretical model of resistance, demonstrate that there are '...some acts

[that] are overtly oppositional, yet unrecognizable because they are deliberately hidden from view' (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.540). For these scholars resistance need not be visible to others to be considered resistance—in fact one of the defining features of 'everyday' resistance is that they evade the attention of those that they are undertaken against.⁵⁴ However, there are scholars that strongly contend that resistance must lead to 'recognition and even reaction' in order to be deemed to be resistance (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.541). This differentiation highlighted by Hollander and Einwohner can roughly be seen as mapping onto El-Kholy's distinction based on the 'consequences' of resistance.

The second issue that the authors identify as a key fault line between scholars of resistance is the question of intent. However, their focus on intent differs from that of El-Kholy, who examines whether or not actions are motivated by individual or collective gains. Hollander and Einwohner are more focused on the issue of intent as related to consciousness, noting that the central question confronting scholars of resistance is 'must the actor be aware that she or he is resisting some exercise of power—and intending to do so—for an action to qualify as resistance?' (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.542). A consideration of intentions, they note, is almost always exclusively reserved for discussions of 'everyday acts of resistance' because the intentions of overt, revolutionary resistance is seen as a 'non-issue' (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.542). The authors

⁵⁴ However, it should be noted that while Scott was adamant that resistance did not need to be visible by those it was undertaken against to be considered resistance, he did note that 'everyday' acts of resistance could be visible to 'culturally aware observers' (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.541). Yet, as Hollander and Einwohner also note, there were other scholars who argued that only those acts visible to both the targets of resistance, as well as onlookers could be deemed resistance (2004, p.541).

identify three distinct positions that scholars have taken on this issue: first, there are those who note that consciousness is important in classifying an action as resistance; second there are those who argue that deciphering intent from the actions of others is a difficult and maybe even an impossible task; and finally there are those who do not view intentions as a key feature in defining actions as resistance (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.542-3). Scott's work can be seen as fitting most clearly within the first category, as he viewed intentions as a key factor in resistance (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.542). However, he was also sensitive to the fact that discerning these intentions may be difficult in some situations and that as scholars we may have to 'infer intent from actions' (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.542).

As the discussion above highlights, many scholars dismissed Scott's work because it lacked all of the qualities that they associated with 'real resistance.' For these scholars the types of 'resistance' described and outlined in Scott's work amounted to 'nothing more than incidental acts that are individualistic, and opportunistic with no revolutionary consequences, and embodying intentions to accommodate the structures of oppression rather than challenge them' (El-Kholy 2002, p.16). These acts were seen as having no revolutionary potential and were thus not worthy of being deemed true resistance, and therefore not worthy of scholarly attention. The analysis in this dissertation focuses on capturing and analyzing the types of resistance that Scott had earlier sought to bring to light. I strongly contend, in line with Scott, that in order to get a full picture of the lives and realities of those being studied (in this case, transnational call center workers) one must take into account the full range of actions (especially forms of resistance) that they

undertake—both those actions that are more overt, as well as those that are less visible. To limit the study of worker resistance to only those actions that are aimed at openly challenging capitalism would be to overlook an entire ‘spectrum of resistance’ (Tripp 1997, p.5) practices that workers utilize, and more importantly, the larger effects that these actions may have on the economic system within which they are situated. And here, like Scott, I maintain that in the case of participant observation research—where the researcher is documenting the actions of those around them—one must, in many cases, ‘infer intent from actions’ (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, p.542). However, as I am drawing solely on the data obtained through the series of interviews with former call center employees in this dissertation, this issue is largely overcome, as I was able to ask respondents follow up questions when they discussed the types of resistance present within their workplaces, to better get at the question of motivation and intent. Although, that is not to say that there are not forms of resistance that presented themselves during the interviews that were not identified as such by the interviewees, that I later classed as resistance based on the context and background information provided by them, as well as the supporting literature on the topic that detailed similar types of action.

However, it is important to note that while Scott’s work represented an important theoretical re-conceptualization of resistance—shifting scholars’ attention towards everyday manifestations of resistance—it was almost entirely devoid of any analysis of how these everyday acts were gendered. Gillian Hart (1991) takes this lack of gender analysis as her starting point. In reviewing Scott’s work, Hart notes that there was actually a strong (but latent) gender dimension to the resistance that he highlighted and

discussed, despite the fact that he made no concerted effort to examine it in any detail (1991, p.94). In her analysis—based both on Scott’s ethnographic evidence, as well as her own—Hart demonstrates that there is an inherently gendered nature to the everyday acts of resistance that he had chronicled (1991, pp.94-118). As Hart highlights, there were differences in the labour patterns between the men and women in Scott’s study, with men being hired as individuals and women being hired as collective ‘labour gangs’ (1991, p.104). This gendered system of labor, Hart argues, translated into different forms of resistance being undertaken by men and women (1991, p.104). As she notes, ‘...female labour groups would strike as a unit whereas male workers tended to walk out as individuals’ (Hart 1991, p.104). Because of the structure of the economic system, women workers were better able to capitalize on the ability to resist in a collective manner. As Hart explains, women were able to confront large landowners in this way because the patronage based labour system applied more to male workers than it did to women workers (1991, p.110). Hart argues that this exclusion was ‘...a key element in their capacity to organise collectively’ (1991, p.113). Through utilizing the evidence put forth by Scott, Hart was effectively able to show how the gendered labor system within the Malaysian economy had subsequently led to the creation of gendered opportunity structures for resistance.

One finds similar evidence that gendered labor structures strongly impact what forms of resistance are available to men and women in Camp’s (2004) study on slave resistance in antebellum America. In the study, Camp demonstrates that the gendered division of labour in antebellum America served to shape the resistance practices that were available

to male and female slaves (2004, p.6). As Camp explains, female slaves were subject to the ‘geography of containment’ that structured the system of slavery more so, and in different ways, than male slaves were (2004, p.6). In effect, this system was more ‘elastic’ for male slaves than it was for female slaves, as male slaves were often assigned tasks that took them off the plantation, which allowed them to more fully conceive of a life outside of the plantation itself (2004, pp.28-31). The same opportunities to leave the plantations—even if on a temporary basis—were not accorded to female slaves (Camp 2004, pp.30-1). As a result, female slaves were more likely to resist by using practices of ‘truancy’ and ‘absenteeism’ than to become ‘permanent fugitives’ because women were both more tied to the plantations due to ‘family responsibilities,’ and further because they lacked the knowledge of the surrounding geography that male slaves had been able to gain through their ability to periodically leave the plantations (2004, pp.36-38; Camp 2002, pp. 3-4). Camp further explains that ‘...different roles within the family...created diverse responsibilities and conceptions of acceptable behavior for women and men. These duties and gender norms helped to shape fugitive behavior by diminishing women’s rates of flight’ (2002, p.4). Thus, as was the case with Hart’s gendered analysis of Scott’s work, Camp’s study demonstrates that gendered labor structures strongly impact what forms of resistance are available for men and women thereby making resistance gendered. While Hart’s work points to women being more able to resist collectively, and Camp’s to women being less likely to partake in long term resistance, the underlying premise remains the same: men and women workers resist in different

ways, and this resistance is strongly shaped by the gendered labor systems within which they are situated.⁵⁵

Camp's study also lends strong support for Scott's arguments regarding the existence—and importance—of a 'venerable popular culture of resistance' that serves to underpin and support individual acts of everyday resistance (Scott 1989, p.35). As Camp details,

The tenacity of female and male runaways was due in part to community efforts to assist them. Truants needed the collaboration of the larger community, and often they got it. Women, in particular, supported runaways by extending meals they prepared for their families to truants. In doing so, they turned their reproductive labour, which partially functioned to maintain the labour supply and partially to sustain the people they loved or to whom they felt a sense of duty, into a source of resistance (2002, p.9).

Thus, not only can the everyday forms of resistance in this example be viewed as gendered (as women were far more likely to be truants than permanent fugitives, for the reasons discussed above), but in addition, the culture of resistance which supported these actions was also gendered, relying heavily on the female slave's reproductive labour to aid those fleeing plantations.⁵⁶ The 'venerable popular culture of resistance' first outlined

⁵⁵ DeLamotte et al. (1997, p.7) similarly highlight the importance of considering societal structures, as well as a host of other considerations, in examining women's resistance. They state, 'women's resistance is fluid and mobile, complex and polyvalent. Those activities that might be said to constitute women's resistance adapt to shifts in material conditions, ideologies, and social systems' (ibid).

⁵⁶ Camp's study, in line with Scott's earlier formulations of resistance, serves to challenge the strict boundary that has been placed between individual and collective forms of resistance by some scholars. As Camp explains, 'women's work supporting truancy complicates the distinction between individual and collective resistance, and between the personal and the political. Absenteeism was very often a sudden, solitary reaction to a particular grievance. At the same time individual truants partially depended

by Scott, and here supported by Camp, will also be discussed in relation to the forms of everyday resistance that were highlighted during the interviews that I conducted with former transnational call center workers. Similar to the forms of resistance outlined by these authors, interviewees noted forms of resistance in the workplace that relied on an underlying culture of resistance that ensured these actions would remain hidden from call center supervisors and managers.

Turiel offers an in-depth exploration of how everyday resistance is a pervasive part of everyday life, in several different social, economic, and political contexts. He presents several examples of everyday resistance, which are all deeply influenced by gender, in order to 'illustrate that resistance and subversion are common among people in positions of little power in the social hierarchy—especially on the part of women in patriarchal societies' (Turiel 2003, p.115). The first example he discusses comes from his own childhood experiences in Greece and Turkey, and later living in New York within a community of people that had similarly immigrated from these countries to the United States (Turiel 2003, p.119). He explains that the 'cultural practices' that he was exposed to dictated that that:

men were in socially dominant positions and women were in subordinate positions...women did not work outside the home and men had almost exclusive control of the family's finances...women were given an allotted amount of money (such as a weekly allowance) for household expenses' (2003, p.119).

upon others for assistance. Many bondswomen helped runaways because they understood runaways to be protesting their conditions of labour and life' (2002, pp. 10-11).

In light of this, he explains that women would often hide money from their husbands, in order to gain some degree of control over their lives, and also to ensure that they would have necessary funds should members require assistance, as well as to ensure that they would have some savings after their husbands had died (Turiel 2003, p.119). These acts of gendered everyday resistance, similar to those discussed by Camp, relied on the presence of a 'venerable popular culture of resistance' (Scott 1989, p.35). As Turiel explains, 'women conspired with other women they could trust. In addition, they often discussed their concerns and activities with their children' (2003, p.119).

In a second example of everyday resistance and subversion, Turiel examines Fatima Mernissi's book *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*,⁵⁷ in which she describes her experiences growing up within a harem in Fez in the 1940s (2003, pp. 119-120). In the book, Mernissi recounts how the women in the harem, who were forbidden to listen to the radio when men were not present, would secretly do so anyway (Turiel 2003, p.120). As Turiel explains, this form of everyday resistance 'went beyond recreational activities such as listening to music. The women desired freedoms and rights in many respects...[they] also desired a future for their daughters with greater freedoms and opportunities than had been available to them' (2003, p.120). In one instance Mernissi recalls her mother explaining to her that:

the whole crusade against chewing gum and American cigarettes was in fact a crusade against women's rights as well... 'so you see', said Mother, 'a woman who chews gum is in part making a revolutionary gesture. Not because she chews

⁵⁷ Fatima Mernissi, 1994. *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of Harem Girlhood*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

gum *per se*, but because chewing gum is not prescribed by the code (Mernissi 1994 quoted in Turiel 2003, p.120).

Here again the importance of gender and actions within the everyday sphere are brought to light. Much like the forms of resistance outlined and analyzed by Scott, those detailed by Turiel explore the ways in which forms of everyday action can (although they do not necessarily have to) have much larger consequences, including challenging gendered, racial, and class-based systems of oppression. However, again, this potential need not be seen as a requirement to grant certain types of action the status or designation of ‘resistance,’ which was an especially important point for Scott.

Riessmann’s study of the stigma experienced by married women who are childless in South India pushes the focus from simply looking at the ways that gender, and gendered societal structures, can impact what forms of resistance are available to women by also importantly exploring the connections between women’s resistance and other ‘social identities’ (Shields 2008, p.303) such as social class and age (2000, p.111).⁵⁸ She notes that ‘poor village women of childbearing age are devalued in ways affluent and professional women avoid; differently situated women challenge dominant definitions and ideologies in of family in distinctive ways’ (Riessman 2000, p.111). This position is similarly reflected in Marchand’s work on gendered resistance. As Marchand asserts, in investigating the gendered nature of resistance it is of crucial importance to consider the

⁵⁸ Abu-Lughod’s (1990) study of the forms of everyday resistance used by Awlad ‘Ali Bedouin women similarly reveals that multiple influences—i.e. gender, age—can serve to structure and inform resistance practices. In the study, she argues that we should avoid the urge to ‘romanticize resistance,’ that is, ‘to read all forms of resistance as signs of the ineffectiveness of systems of power and of the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated’ (Abu-Lughod 1990, p.42). Rather, we should ‘use resistance as a *diagnostic* of power’ (ibid, emphasis in original).

‘positionality’ of the subject who is resisting (2005, p.219). This is because the ‘differential/differentiated positionalities of women’ will affect the forms of resistance that they undertake (Marchand 2005, p.219).⁵⁹ DeLamotte et al. (1997, p. 2) also acknowledge that ‘social identities’ (Shields 2008, p.303) other than—and in many cases, in addition to—gender will inform resistance. They note that ‘...sometimes [gender] claim[s] center stage, at other times receding in importance’ and that we ‘...need to think from a both/and, rather than an either/ or, perspective on women and resistance’ (DeLamotte 1997, p.2). As with both Hart and Camp’s study, gender and the everyday are placed front and center in discussions of resistance in Riessman’s study, however, her work further brings to light the important role that other forms of discrimination have on structuring the ways in which women chose to resist. Her piece speaks to the incredibly complex relationships that exist between social structures, everyday experience, and manifestations of resistance—relationships that will be further unpacked throughout this dissertation.

In her article, in which she explicitly builds on Scott’s work on everyday forms of resistance, Riessman explains that while the ‘motherhood mandate’—i.e. the societal expectation that women will bear children—is not something unique to Indian society (2000, p.111). However, she points out that it does take on a more powerful meaning within a society in which ‘bearing and rearing children are central to a woman’s power and well-being, and reproduction brings in its stead concrete benefits over the life course’

⁵⁹ While Marchand does not explicitly focus on gendered *worker* resistance, her account does offer valuable insight on the subject. Thus, I aim to build on this conception of resistance in considering how the global gendered division of labor (and women’s ‘positionality’ within it) affects what resistance practices that women workers undertake.

(2000, pp. 112-113; fn. 2, p.132). In light of the importance placed on motherhood, she investigates the stigma and discrimination experienced by married women of childbearing age who—either voluntarily or involuntarily—remain childless, and how they in turn respond to this. As she highlights, ‘...a married woman who is childless in India exists at the margins, in a liminal space—socially betwixt and between’ (2000, p.115), and as a result many such women experienced repeated and invasive questioning, as well as harassment from those around them because of being childless (2000, p. 119). While she notes that women in India who remain childless, regardless of social class, inevitably face such questioning, their differing social and economic positions can have a significant influence on and effect how they are able to maneuver around such conversations, or, when they do occur, impact how they are able to respond (p.119-124). In examining the forms of ‘everyday’ resistance used by these women, Riessman outlines a typology including several distinctive forms of ‘everyday’ resistance (2000, pp. 123-129). These include: ‘taking a stand in an interaction (speaking out and acting up), holding one’s ground by refusing to internalize a deviant label (resistant thinking), purposefully electing to sidestep a confrontation (strategic avoidance), and finally rejecting motherhood altogether’ (2000, p.130). Some of these forms of gendered resistance will be explored in more detail in later chapters, in analyzing the data collected for this project concerning the resistance practices of transnational call center employees. Riessman’s study, while not specifically looking at the resistance practices of women workers, does importantly put into full relief the degree to which ‘social identities’ (Shields 2008, p.303) other than gender can importantly be seen to structure and inform

the forms of resistance that women opt to express.⁶⁰ Again, the insights provided by Riessman are invaluable for studying the intersectional influences that serve to structure resistance, and will factor into my discussions of resistance practices I observed.

In line with Hart's and Camp's analyses, Kenney's investigation of resistance within communist Poland further serves to highlight the importance of both gendered divisions of labour, as well as gendered 'tropes' or meaning structures (Salzinger 2003, p.15), in shaping and informing the forms of resistance workers undertake (Kenney 1999, p. 425). While not necessarily concerned with 'everyday forms of resistance,' Kenney importantly foregrounds the importance of gender in his analysis of resistance. He begins by outlining how the communist state itself was highly gendered, with its identity very much linked to the highly masculinized image of the 'hero worker' (1999, pp. 403-405). He then proceeds by highlighting that while the more visible incidents of resistance to communism, which were largely undertaken by male factory workers working within 'masculinized industries,' posed challenges to the state, they were, in many respects, less

⁶⁰ Riessman's study is also key in relation to the arguments and data presented in my dissertation because, similar to the forms of worker resistance I explore, those detailed in her study occur within a context where collective resistance is relatively non-existent. She explains, '...there is no collective movement against compulsory motherhood. Although there are long-standing feminist interests and organizations in India (i.e. health activists are working to curtail coercive sterilization processes—an important cause of infertility), the difficulties of women who attempt to construct families without children remain private issues' (2000, p.126). While the contexts in which the resistance practices Riessman and myself are discussing are vastly different, the fact that the existence of collective resistance options remain scarce for both, thus making undertaking smaller, more everyday forms of resistance more likely, represents an important common ground. I will discuss this in greater detail in later chapters in which I both outline the forms of resistance available for call center workers in the region I studied, as well as in relation to my larger argument concerning the 'feminization' of resistance practices within the global economy.

effective in posing a direct challenge than the resistance on the part of female factory workers (Kenney 1999, pp.400-408). In particular, Kenney focuses on the actions of women workers in a cotton mill in Łódź in February, 1971.

As Kenney details, following ‘price reforms’ set out by the Polish state in December, 1970, ‘workers in the shipyards and ports along the Baltic coast struck, staged marches and demonstrations, and even burned down party headquarters in several cities’ (1999, p.409). However, even following the deaths of several workers, the state was able to quell the resistance with ‘a dramatic appeal to patriotism,’ which led workers to ‘put aside the mundane concerns of food prices’ (Kenney 1999, p.409). Soon after these events, women workers in a large cotton mill in Łódź went on strike in protest of the prices increases, which soon spread to surrounding mills (Kenney 1999, p.410). Less than a week into the strike, Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz was sent to talk to the women workers, and offer a ‘limited pay raise’ (Kenney 1999, p.410). Accounts of this meeting include descriptions of the women in attendance singing songs, shouting insults such as ‘your wife, Mrs. Jaroszewicz, loads ham on her sandwiches, while my children eat dry bread,’ and crying (Kenney 1999, pp. 410-411). Subsequently, unlike with the earlier protests in December, these women workers were able to force the state to address their demands (Kenney 1999, p.410-411).

As he explains, the women workers’ resistance in this case proved to be so formidable because their ‘gender identity gave women access to particularly powerful symbols, the most important of which was motherhood: a *mother-worker* was the most dangerous of

all [for the state]' (1999, pp. 402-403, emphasis in original). He details that in light of the pervasive national culture that emphasized 'protectiveness toward women'—a fact that the women workers were fully aware of—'the authorities simply could not repress the women as they had the men' (p.414). In addition, unlike with the first protest, the women workers held firm to their reasons for resisting. The women workers continued to voice demands regarding 'the right to be fed, or at least the right to equal access to food,' issues which had very real consequences for their daily lives due to the 'societal division of labour' which left them in charge of domestic responsibilities, including shopping for food (Kenney 1999, pp. 405-413). As Kenney explains, 'the women of Łódź thrust social demands back into the political realm, fully aware of the power their protest as *women* would have. The complaints about food...immediately returned the strike to a context that had been lost in December: ordinary consumers trying to feed their families' (1999, p.415). Here, the intimate connection that exists between gender and resistance is again brought into full relief. The women workers involved in the Łódź strike used whatever means were available to them—such as drawing on powerful gendered tropes surrounding motherhood—to challenge the state's economic policies. Overall, Kenney's study serves to illuminate the ways in which workers maneuver and resist within highly restricted political and economic environments, and importantly how these actions are unmistakably gendered.

In addition, Kenney's study, with its focus on alternative forms of resistance, finds common ground with Scott's theoretical work on resistance. Although, the forms of gendered resistance Kenney outlines are not necessarily ones which would easily be

categorized as ‘everyday,’ even though women’s experiences within the sphere of the ‘everyday’ played a large role in influencing them to resist, and informing the ways in which they chose to resist (1999, p. 407). As he highlights, the Polish state greatly controlled and limited the forms of protest and resistance available to workers, and citizens more generally. However, women found ways around these restrictions that had serious effects for the communist state. As Kenney explains,

...a state that repressed the right to organize in the usual ways left open the possibility of new, unexpected forms of activism, which women, playing on the roles assigned to them, were able to pursue. Women’s resistance, in which concerns from the nominally private sphere were thrust forward as points of conflict with the state, showed indirectly how large the private sphere was in the eyes of the communist state (1999, p.425).

The ability of women workers to find inventive and imaginative ways of resisting within controlled settings will be further explored in later sections of this dissertation. In particular, this will factor in to discussions of how women workers within today’s transnational service industries have similarly found ways to evade and negotiate control within restrictive workplaces.

Through these authors explorations of women’s resistance in vastly different economic, political, and social contexts one can begin to truly see the value that Scott’s original formulation of ‘everyday forms of resistance’ can have for studying forms of gendered resistance, and the insights that it can offer a feminist analysis of these types of actions. In fact, Thomas and Davies argue that feminist scholars have made crucial moves to expand what ‘counts’ as resistance, in much the same manner as Scott had aimed to do

(2005b, p.720; see also Redden and Terry 2013, p.242). They also importantly highlight that the subject of resistance itself is central to feminism, explaining that ‘...struggle, emancipation and transformative change are fundamental to feminism, its theorizing is grounded in resistance. Feminist theory is thus well placed in problematizing and extending the definition of resistance, and offering new insights for political praxis’ (Thomas and Davies 2005b, p.713).⁶¹ Although, interestingly, Thomas and Davies’ article highlights that there have been largely parallel debates occurring within studies of worker resistance (or ‘organization studies’), and within feminist scholarship (2005b, p.732). These debates have been centered on the issue of what should ‘count’ as resistance (Thomas and Davies 2005b, p.732).

As Thomas and Davies explain—and as is outlined at the beginning portion of this section—scholars concerned with the topic of worker resistance have disagreed on the matter of what ‘counts’ as resistance, with one side arguing for an ‘‘all or nothing’ view of resistance’, and the other side who recognizes the importance of smaller forms of resistance, or what they term ‘routine and micro-politics of resistance’ (Thomas and Davies 2005b, p.712). As the authors note, this debate has paralleled one within feminist studies, largely between radical feminists and post-structuralist feminists (Thomas and

⁶¹ The centrality of resistance to feminism is highlighted in the definition of feminism offered by Wieringa (1995, p.3). She states that feminism embodies ‘an awareness of women’s oppression on domestic, social, economic and political levels, accompanied by a willingness to struggle against oppression’ (ibid). She also speaks to the need to examine the gendered nature of women’s resistance—the primary subject of this project—noting that ‘...in their struggles for national liberation, against imperialism, in labour movements and in race or food riots, women participated in a gendered way’ (ibid). In addition, she importantly highlights that women workers in several countries have historically been the first to ‘demand political rights’ (Wieringa 1995, p.14).

Davies 2005b, p.720). Radical feminists, they explain, ‘...argue that freedom for women can only be achieved by breaking out from the patriarchal system... [they see] existing institutional arrangements are therefore ‘fundamentally flawed’ (Ferguson 1984: 4) and need to be overthrown if women’s oppression is to be removed’ (2005b, p.720). In contrast, for poststructuralist feminists, ‘resistance is often small-scale and subtle, located within specific contexts and for specific social groups. There is no assumption that these local struggles are part of a spectrum of oppression or a totalizing emancipatory project, although they may well be’ (Thomas and Davies 2005b, p.720).

Ultimately, for both worker resistance studies and feminist studies the underlying disagreement has hinged on whether or not one can, or even should, accept forms of resistance as ‘real’ which do not necessarily contain a ‘revolutionary’ aim—in one case, this refers to forms of resistance with an eye to challenging the capitalist system of production, and the other, forms of resistance that have an eye to challenging patriarchal societal structures. Although, again, as the authors highlight many feminist scholars (much like scholars within studies on worker resistance, such as Scott) have begun to challenge and ultimately expand the traditionally narrow definitions of resistance.

Thomas and Davies’ own study of social worker managers’ processes of professional identity construction demonstrates such a challenge. They conclude by strongly asserting that ‘...a micro-political resistance is emancipatory and the effectiveness of small-scale localized struggles in effecting larger scale change should not be underestimated’ (2005b, p.733; Thomas and Davies 2005a).

In addition, Scott's work—through its primary focus on the 'everyday'—can also be seen to share another important common ground with feminist scholarship. As Wieringa highlights, within feminism the sphere of the 'everyday' has long been viewed as being of the utmost importance (1995, p.5). She notes (quoting de Lauretis) that,

feminism defines itself as a political instance, not merely a sexual politics, but a politics of experience, of everyday life, which later then in turn enters the public sphere of expression and creative practice... and '...feminism has located [epistemological priority] in the personal, the subjective, the body, the symptomatic, the quotidian, as the very site of material inscription of the ideological (1995, p.5).

The women's resistance discussed in Kenney's study perfectly embodies this connection to the everyday. As he detailed, it was women's daily lived realities that allowed them to see first hand the effects of the state's economic policies, which in turn allowed them to strongly connect to, and sustain, the cause they were fighting for (1999, p.407). In fact, this strong connection between women's everyday lived experiences—whether within the household, within the workplace, or within society more generally—and the forms of resistance that are available to them, and which they chose to express, is evident throughout all the cases of gendered resistance outlined above. Tretheway further highlights that, 'many feminists believe that local and contextual acts of resistance are an appropriate strategy for women because while it may be impossible to resist patriarchy as a universal phenomenon, women can resist specific instances of patriarchal power and specific patriarchal structures' (1997, p.283). I will return to, and further unpack, the significance of the link between women's everyday experiences and resistance in later chapters.

As this section demonstrates, Scott's groundbreaking theoretical work on 'everyday forms of resistance' offers a crucial starting point for examining resistance in many settings. In addition, scholars who have subsequently built on and expanded his work, especially those that have been more attentive to ways in which gender and other intersecting 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303) serve to structure and inform resistance practices, offer important insights in how to study worker resistance within the current—highly gendered—global division of labour. As many of the authors considered throughout this section highlight, gendered labour structures serve to influence and shape the forms of resistance available to both men and women workers. In chapters four and five I outline how the gendered division of labour that serves to structure the global economy has subsequently led to the development of gendered opportunity structures of resistance. In doing so I build on the work of Smyth and Grijns who noted that the resistance practices of women workers in the Indonesian export manufacturing sector were primarily of an 'everyday' nature, and that this was a direct result of the fact that 'the organization of labor [...] shapes forms of resistance' (1997, p.20), as well as Koch-Schulte's (2001) study of everyday resistance within Canadian call centers.

As will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, women workers in today's global economy are more likely to be employed within feminized workforces which provide few spaces for overt resistance, and are thus more likely to rely on everyday forms of resistance as primary sites of contestation. Further, I argue that these 'everyday' gendered actions—in line with Hobson and Seabrooke's (2007) 'Everyday International Political Economy' framework—are of central importance in studying the international, and any

study of the current global political economy must acknowledge and attend to their significance. Based on this argument I put forward an explicitly Feminist ‘EIPE’ analytical framework (which I term the FEPGE approach) in the next chapter. Building on Hobson and Seabrooke’s work, this model represents a theoretical extension of Scott’s work into the international sphere, with a central and explicit emphasis on the importance of gender (which both Scott and Hobson and Seabrooke’s work lack). Ultimately, this dissertation—building on the insights provided in this chapter, and in the following chapters—attempts to highlight, acknowledge, and begin to unpack the complex relationships that exist between gender, resistance, the everyday, and the international.

‘...feminist analysts who do everyday feminist theorising send the message that those who do International Relations must take gender seriously as part of an organising framework of world politics in order to do their work properly (as do Windsor, 1988; Halliday 1988). They must get over the sense that international relations is exclusively about states, war, trade and official decision-makers, and consider politics unfolding in everyday places and around everyday activities that can have more than everyday consequences. *Women are part of the everyday. It is their assigned place.* Fixed on the overstuffed, gout-ridden or bullet splattered, or grandiose, we merely fool ourselves into thinking that there is no everyday realm in international relations.’

—Christine Sylvester 1996, p.267 (*emphasis added*).

Chapter Two: Constructing an Explicitly Feminist ‘Everyday International Political Economy’ (FEPGE) Analytical Framework⁶²

Increasingly, International Relations (IR) and International Political Economy (IPE) scholars are asserting the need to turn our attention towards the everyday in an effort to better understand the international (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007; Hobson and Seabrooke 2010; Davies 2006; Freeman 2001; Elias 2010; Sylvester 1996; Lipschutz 2000; Watson 2011; Davies and Niemann 2002; Guillaume 2011a; Guillaume 2011b; Redden and Terry (2013)). As Davies explains, ‘calls to ground the study of international relations in everyday life have found increasing salience among critical approaches in the field. Feminists, poststructuralists and historical materialists have all sought to address problems in international relations theory by breaking down conceptual divisions between the domestic and international, between the local and the global, or between the private and the public’ (2006, p.219). In fact, a recent forum discussion in the journal *International Political Sociology* (2011) was wholly devoted to bringing the everyday

⁶² An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Convention, in San Francisco, California, on 4 April 2013.

into discussions of the international.⁶³ Yet despite these efforts, ‘...for International Relations (IR), and particularly for International Political Economy (IPE), everyday life remains largely under- or untheorized, with damaging consequences for the concept’s contribution to critique’ (Davies 2006, p.219).

John M. Hobson and Leonard Seabrooke’s (2007) recently articulated ‘Everyday International Political Economy (EIPE)’ model seeks to act as a corrective to this under-theorization of the everyday and its relation to the international. Their work has emerged from—and can be properly situated within—the growing body of literature that seeks to bring to light and understand the complex relationships between the everyday spaces and actors and the international. With their EIPE model they have directly challenged the narrow focus of traditional (or what they term ‘Regulatory’) IPE scholars, who look only at a ‘small number of big and important things,’ such as ‘hegemony, trade and financial flows and international regulatory institutions at the international level’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.1; see also Davies 2006, p.219 and Sylvester 1996, pp.266-267).⁶⁴ As

⁶³ See *International Political Sociology*, 2011, 4(5), pp.446-462. The forum, edited by Xavier Guillaume, included contributions from a diverse range of scholars, including Cynthia Enloe (2011), Mark B. Salter (2011), Leonard Seabrooke (2011), Jesse Crane-Seeber (2011), as well as Guillaume (2011a) himself. As Guillaume outlines, ‘the authors of this forum provide answer to the questions “why” and “how” the everyday is an important tool to understand the international as a practice and a process. Five different issues will be looked at: gender, gaming, counterinsurgency, world economy, and resistance’ (p.446). This forum represents a crucial intervention into IPE scholarship as it puts the ‘everyday’ front in center in analysis of global processes.

⁶⁴ Lipschutz offers a critical explanation as to why such spaces and actors have been largely excluded from traditional, mainstream IPE scholarship. He argues that it is not ‘justif[ied] to concentrat[e] almost exclusively on the beliefs and activities of states and leaders and the ways in which their actions play out structurally. Yet much of the international political economy (IPE) literature does precisely this, treating it as a “true” picture of the “real” world. Such naturalization is one example of the way in which a

they state, with this literature, ‘it is as if the study of the world economy can be gleaned by examining the actions of ten per cent of the world at most, while the other ninety per cent are but power-takers whose actions are inconsequential for the making of the world economy. And it is to assume that this ten per cent are responsible for the ‘big and important things’ (read ‘the only significant things worthy of study’) that go on in the world economy’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.11). Their framework importantly serves to bring everyday actors back into discussions about the global economy (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.1).

While Hobson and Seabrooke (2007) are engaged in an unquestionably necessary conversation about who and what counts in our analysis of the international, their model lacks an explicitly feminist analysis, which is essential in order to comprehend more fully the global political economy. Gender, race, sexuality, and myriad other intersecting ‘social identities’ (Shields 2008, p.303) serve to inform everyday actions⁶⁵, which—as their 'EIPE' model crucially highlights—impact the international. More than one of the

particular kind of power—the power to specify certain theoretical parameters and suppositions while excluding others—serves to reproduce other kinds of power, here the unchallenged power of states and leaders’ (2000, p.143).

⁶⁵ Denzin highlights the relationship between gender and the everyday, stating ‘the gendered identity is an interactional production. It is embedded in those interactional places (home, work) that give recurring meaning to ordinary experience’ (1993, p.200). Thus, as he further explains, ‘[everyday] activities constitute individuals as concrete gendered subjects in the gender stratification order’ (1993, p.201; see also Thapan 1995). Steans further asserts that ‘gender and the various practices contributing to its constitution are the most crucial context in which to situate a purportedly neutral and universal subject in reason. The subject is inevitably embroiled within knowledge-governing interests which mark and direct her activities’ (1999, p.122). Given this, I argue that it is essential to pay attention to the gendered nature of everyday acts, especially within a model that places such strong emphasis and focus on the everyday sphere.

contributors to their book offer feminist and post-colonial analyses of the relationships between everyday actions and the international. However, the ‘EIPE’ model itself does not place central analytical importance on gender, or other important intersecting ‘social identities’ (Shields 2008, p.303), in investigating the connections between the everyday and the international. Thus, what is required is the construction of an explicitly feminist model of ‘EIPE’ (or what I refer to as the feminist everyday politics of the global economy (FEPGE) approach), that allows for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between gender, everyday actions, and the international to be brought to light. By incorporating existing insights from feminist IR and IPE scholars, this dissertation aims to begin formulating such a framework.

The lack of focus on gender has been commonplace within the field. As Balka explains, ‘women’s day-to-day experiences become invisible in many accounts of political economy (Smith 1987), which suggests that we need a political economy that analyzes how women’s lives are caught up in historic, political, and economic processes’ (2002, p.60-61). Feminist scholars such as Elias remain hopeful that ‘...the ongoing development of an everyday IPE perspective will play a significant role in bridging the gaps between feminist and non-feminist IPE scholarship’ (2010, p.608). It is hoped that in beginning to outline an explicitly feminist EIPE model (i.e. the FEPGE approach) which builds both on the model provided by Hobson and Seabrooke, as well as a rich body of feminist IR and IPE scholarship—that these gaps will begin to become less expansive.

In the following section I briefly outline Hobson and Seabrooke's EIPE framework, as well as discuss some of the contributions to their edited collection—in particular, Michele Ford and Nicola Piper's chapter on 'female migrant labour resistance in East and Southeast Asia' (2007, pp. 63-79) and Ara Wilson's chapter on 'Asian agency in the making of capitalist modernity in Thailand' (2007, pp.160-176). In the following section I outline the important contributions that feminist IR and IPE scholars have made in regard to recognizing the significance of everyday spaces and actors and their importance for understanding the international. In the third section I begin to outline and construct an explicitly feminist EIPE analytical framework (referred to here as the FEPGE approach). In chapters four and five I utilize this approach to examine how workers resist within the highly feminized transnational call center workplace—looking in particular at the impact that larger gendered labour structures and notions of skill impact the everyday space of the call center, especially the opportunities that workers have to resist. I also, in general, reflect on the ways in which this approach offers feminist IPE scholars a way to gain a more nuanced understanding of the connections between the global economy, the everyday, and gender. In particular, in chapter five, I present a typology of the various gendered forms of everyday worker resistance that were highlighted by participants during the semi-structured interviews I conducted, with these actions broken down in to two categories: 1) feminized forms of everyday resistance, and 2) distinctly gendered forms of feminized everyday resistance. Using the FEPGE approach, with its central emphasis on gender and the everyday, was key in allowing me to obtain the data that I present in this dissertation (especially in chapters four and five), as it helped to inform and guide my decisions about what questions to ask, and what issues to focus on with

interviewees. While the resulting data is not included within the dissertation (for reasons outlined in the next chapter), the FEGPE approach also helped inform what actions, behaviors, and interactions to focus on when I conducted my initial three month phase of covert participant within a Canadian transnational call center.

2.1 Hobson and Seabrooke's 'Everyday International Political Economy' (EIPE) Framework.

Hobson and Seabrooke's (2007) EIPE framework is not the first effort within IR and IPE scholarship to shed light on the everyday and its relation to the international. In fact, as will be discussed in the following section, there has been a longstanding and concerted effort on the part of feminist IR and IPE scholars to highlight the importance of exploring the relationships between gender, the everyday, and the international. However, even within IR and IPE scholarship more generally there has been a move towards incorporating the everyday as a site of importance in studies of the international. Matt Davies (2006)⁶⁶ outlines and analyzes several previous attempts⁶⁷ within IPE scholarship to bring in the everyday. However, ultimately he asserts that they all 'share certain

⁶⁶ Davies builds on the work of Lefebvre, in particular his critique of everyday life. As Davies explains, for Lefebvre 'everyday life does not have a given character rather it is shaped by its contradictions' (2006, p.224). He envisioned both the 'misery of everyday life' as well as the 'power of everyday life,' and as Davies asserts that within this dual depiction of the everyday 'the point is that even in this burden one can glimpse moments—moments understood by Lefebvre in terms of glimpses of the possible within the present—of potential for something beyond it' (2006, p.224).

⁶⁷ He focuses on the work of 'Timothy Sinclair (1999), writing from an historical materialist perspective, advocates an 'international political economy of the commonplace.' Paul Langley (2003), developing a critical political economy of finance, seeks a conception of global finance grounded in everyday practices. David Campbell's poststructuralist arguments for 'transversal relations' and 'prosaic politics' indicate the everyday as a site where the *politics* in global politics takes place (1996)' (Davies 2006, pp.224-225).

problems in their conceptualization of everyday life' (2006, p.225). He explains that 'each faces difficulties theorizing resistance due in part to the ways in which each understands the everyday as a level of social life. Conceiving of social life in terms of levels tends to treat everyday life as a ground upon which global forces act' (2006, p.225). As will be made clear in later sections, this is a highly problematic way to envision the relationship between the everyday and the international, and it is suggested that conceiving of this relationship in a multi-directional manner is a more useful approach.

Davies and Niemann (whose work is cited by Hobson and Seabrooke) have argued—similarly building on the theoretical work of Lefebvre (see chapter two)⁶⁸—that there is still a common tendency within much of the traditional, mainstream IR (as well as IPE) scholarship to overlook the ways in which everyday spaces and everyday actors impact the international (2002, p.568). As they explain, '...by conceptualizing space as a container, IR theory occludes an examination of how people actually produce international social relations' (Davies and Niemann 2002, p.568). This, they continue, '...produces a common sense view of the world in which the conduct of international relations appears to be an activity for experts who are situated in clearly demarcated spaces with little relevance for the everyday concerns of people, beyond their control and

⁶⁸ As Davies and Niemann explain, for Lefebvre '...the potential for emancipatory action is created through the recognition of the contradictions between the hegemonic claims about the life in capitalist societies and the actual experience of everyday life' (2002, p.559). Following from this, they argue that 'we believe that this insight is equally relevant for IR: its hegemonic claims about the nature of global politics can be overcome through the recognition of the contradictions in the reality of global politics in everyday life and theoretical claims which reserve this area of social relations to elites in government and business' (ibid).

inaccessible to them' (Davies and Niemann 2002, p.568). Ultimately, as they highlight, this leads to a conception of the international in which '...international relations are not merely mystified by IR theory; international relations are also *alienated* relations' (Davies and Niemann 2002, p.568, emphasis in original). Therefore, Davies and Niemann issue an important call to investigate the connections between the everyday and in the international. They strongly assert that,

We can no longer be satisfied with an exclusive or even predominant focus on the conduct of statecraft or diplomacy, even under their contemporary guises of multilateral and international agreements for regulating the world economy or for peacekeeping and the protection of human rights. Instead, we must examine how international relations are produced in the daily activities of all people at various levels and scales. Furthermore, we must account for the waxing and waning of the capacities of specific social agents to effect global politics, and for the circulation of struggles among different actors and between the various levels of social life (2002, p.567).

Thus, for Davies and Niemann, it is essential that proper attention be paid to everyday spaces and actors in order to fully understand the role they play in 'producing' the international. In short, they state, 'IR theory must overcome its fascination with elites and investigate the concrete experiences of people' (Davies and Niemann 2002, p.577).

Hobson and Seabrooke's 'EIPE' framework—along with the authors within their edited volume who make use of their model—can be seen as a vitally important effort to remedy the insufficient attention to the everyday within mainstream IR and IPE literature.

Hobson and Seabrooke, in the introduction to their edited volume, crucially state that 'our everyday actions have important consequences for the constitution and transformation of

the local, national, regional and global contexts' (2007, p.1).⁶⁹ However, they continue, '...conventional work in international political economy (IPE) has little to tell us about how our everyday actions transform the world economy' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.1). Rather, they explain, traditionally the discipline has focused exclusively on the 'the small number of big and important things' that it has viewed as worthy of study (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.1). Thus, in regard to these traditional accounts of the world economy, and world politics, '...everyday actors are assumed to exist they, nevertheless, have no role to play in shaping the world economy. It is as if the elite actors or international institutions write the script, which everyday actors receive in a passive way' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.1). As a result, Hobson and Seabrooke argue that '...IPE has become detached from the real lives of everyday people' (2007, pp.1-2). Therefore, they assert that 'the thrust of this book is to reveal not simply the everyday actors, but more importantly, the manifold ways in which everyday actions can transform the world economy' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.2). However, they highlight that in doing so it is not their intention to 'marginalise the importance of importance of the dominant elites nor to reify the agency of the 'weak', but rather to analyse the ways in which the weak affect and respond to the dominant and how in the process of this interactive relationship generates change in the global economy' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.2). The

⁶⁹ According to Hobson and Seabrooke, 'everyday actions are defined as *acts by those who are subordinate within a broader power relationship but, whether through negotiation, resistance or non-resistance, either incrementally or suddenly, shape, constitute and transform the political and economic environment around and beyond them*' (2007, pp.15-16, emphasis in original). As they explain, 'this broad definition of everyday actions allows us to include a range of agents and individuals to meso-level groupings (e.g. peasants, migrant labourers, trade unions, small investors, low-income groups), and mega-scale aggregations (e.g. peripheral states and peoples)' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.16).

interactive nature of the relationship between the everyday and the international that Hobson and Seabrooke brings to light is further explored in the following section, which outlines feminist scholarship on this topic, and is also subsequently adopted as a key feature of a feminist EIPE model (which I begin to sketch in section three).

Hobson and Seabrooke further explain that “bringing everyday actions in’ in this way enables us to open up new angles for doing IPE’. Our task is to produce a sociological framework for IPE—what we call ‘everyday IPE (EIPE)—which can address existing lacunae in what we call ‘regulatory IPE (RIPE)’ (2007, p.2). They note that they classify this contrasting literature ‘regulatory’ because ‘...the issue of order and the regulation of the world economy occupies center-stage of the research focus. By contrast, EIPE focuses on transformation in the world economy that has slipped the gaze and purview of RIPE’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.2). Thus these two approaches, Hobson and Seabrooke assert, can be sharply differentiated. They state that ‘RIPE and EIPE are differentiated in terms of the initial organising questions that lie at their core. The standard regulatory approach—found especially within neoliberal institutionalism, neorealism and, more recently, systemic constructivism—opens with the fundamental question: ‘who governs and how is international order regulated?’’ (2007, p.5).⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Hobson and Seabrooke note that ‘...the traditional focus on ‘order’ is to a large extent a function of the birth of the discipline at a particular time and place, which in turn imbued RIPE with a specific identity (Katzenstein *et al.* 1998: 655-7). RIPE was born in the US during the early 1970s when the world economy was going into recession, with a concern to restore world order and economic growth’ (2007, p.5).

Further, they explain, ‘in a complimentary move, a second organising question has also guided the study of IPE: ‘Who benefits?’: This was initiated by what we call ‘classical structuralists’, who view the world economy’s central dynamic as governed by the structure of capitalism’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.7). However, they note, ‘as a wealth of scholars have pointed out, in reifying the global structure so they are necessarily unable to provide a picture of bottom-up agency’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.7). They also differentiate their model from rational choice and public choice approaches to IR and IPE. As they explain, ‘...while a focus on individual choice is certainly part of EIPE, nevertheless, we envisage such choices as being informed by historically and socially contingent identities and interests. By contrast, rational choice theorists posit a self-maximizing individual often obscured from time and place or social context’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.9). Also, they assert that the focus on ‘bandwagon[ing]’ within the rational choice approach ‘can blind us to revealing everyday contestations to the exercise of power by elites’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.9).

Hobson and Seabrooke argue that in constructing an EIPE model they are able to ask different questions, and thus shift the focus away from the rather exclusionary concerns of traditional IPE (2007, p.12). As they state ‘instead of asking ‘who governs and who benefits and how international order is maintained?’’, we begin with the sociological question: ‘who acts and how do their actions constitute and transform the world economy in its multiple spatial dimensions?’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.12). In doing so, they argue, ‘...we necessarily bring back into focus the actions of the bottom ninety per cent’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.12). This, Hobson and Seabrooke assert, ‘...enables us

to reveal new sites of agency wherein the sources of change lie,' and allows scholars to '...be open to how agency can be exercised by social actors conventionally considered as 'power-takers' rather than 'power-makers'' (2007, p.12). Here they assert that such an approach '...can reveal the bottom-up processes and everyday actions which both effect change in the local, national, regional or global structural contexts, and/or inform the actions of the top ten per cent' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.13). For them, it is of the utmost importance that everyday actors are seen as potentially powerful agents, whose actions can have important impacts on the global economy.

However, with that said, Hobson and Seabrooke are careful to not speak of everyday actors and actions as being unrestricted, unbounded, or unlimited. They importantly assert that:

none of this is to say that everyday actors can behave entirely as they please or that they always succeed in getting what they want. Nor do we wish structures of power and repression out of existence. By definition agents who are peripheral act within structurally repressive 'confines'. But while at certain times the subordinate are indeed victims, nevertheless, at other times they attain agency. Indeed no agent is either entirely powerless or purely 'confined' within a structural straightjacket for there is always a space, however small, for the expression of agency. Thus we are *not* suggesting that everyday action is limitless in terms of what it can achieve. But we are saying that many of these small, unexplored sites turn out to be far more significant than has been conventionally assumed. Moreover, we should add the point that structures are a product of everyday actions (as much as vice versa) (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.14, emphasis in original).

Here—clearly building on literature concerning 'everyday politics' which includes the work of scholars such as James C. Scott and Benedict Kerkvliet—Hobson and Seabrooke point out that everyday actions do not necessarily *have* to make a visible difference to be

seen as important (2007, p.14). As they assert, ‘...everyday actions do not have to ‘win’ to be meaningful’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.14; see also Koch-Schulte 2002, p.168). Rather, as they explain, the EIPE framework is meant to serve as a tool to ‘revea[l] the manifold ways in which everyday actors shape their own lives and others around and beyond them whether or not they are resisting power’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.15). Therefore, they make clear that we must consider and acknowledge that ‘...everyday actions are ultimately significant to the extent to which they *constitute* the global economy in its multiple spatial dimensions’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.15, emphasis in original).

In many ways their EIPE model can be seen to represent a theoretical scaling up of James C. Scott’s arguments regarding everyday forms of resistance.⁷¹ While Hobson and Seabrooke take a much broader focus on everyday actions than Scott, turning their focus to everyday spaces and actors (not simply acts of resistance, per se), the overlaps between the two are interesting. For Scott, everyday acts of resistance hold the potential to ‘add up’ and create changes at a much larger scale—both at the local, and national levels (Scott 1989, p.35). He explains that, ‘persistent practice of everyday forms of resistance underwritten by a subculture of complicity can achieve many, if not all, of the results aimed at by social movements’ (Scott cited in Gutmann 1993b, p.80). He further asserts

⁷¹ Hobson and Seabrooke address the theoretical debt owed to scholars—such as Scott—who have theorized ‘everyday politics’ (2007, pp.14-15). As they state, ‘...the literature on ‘everyday politics’ is particularly important (Scott 1976, 1985, 1990; de Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 1991b; Kerkvliet 1977, 1990, 2005). Here agency is generally expressed through subtle forms of defiance, which is conducted at the local level and is effected by everyday people in the form of verbal taunts, subversive stories, rumour, ‘sly civility’ and so on’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.14).

that, ‘under appropriate conditions, the accumulation of petty acts can, rather like snowflakes on a steep mountainside, set off an avalanche’ (Scott cited in Murphy 1998, p.529). And indeed, Hobson and Seabrooke’s model is all about foregrounding the importance of everyday actions and the international. Elias, in her review of *Everyday Politics of the World Economy*, aptly links Hobson and Seabrooke’s discussions of the everyday with Scott’s work on the ‘weapons of the weak,’ although she does not explore this connection in an in depth manner (2010, p.604). At one point in their edited volume Hobson and Seabrooke ponder whether ‘global change occur in small incremental acts from agents who do not necessarily realise the aggregated consequences of their individual actions?’ (2007, p.202)—a question which again offers an international extension of Scott’s analysis of individualized everyday acts and their potential to create change at the national level.

While Hobson and Seabrooke did not attend to the central analytical importance of gender in formulating their ‘EIKE’ model,⁷² their edited volume does include works by authors that do conduct feminist—as well as post-colonial—analyses of the everyday. For example, Michele Ford and Nicola Piper (2007) offer a gendered analysis of ‘foreign domestic workers (FDWs)’ within East and Southeast Asia. In this chapter they bring to light both the impact that the gendered global labour structures have on female migrant workers, as well as the degree to which workers within this system are able to maneuver

⁷² Interestingly Hobson and Seabrooke’s work also parallel’s Scott’s in this regard as well. While Scott offered little by way of a gender analysis of everyday forms of resistance, Gillian Hart noted that there was actually a strong, albeit largely unexplored, gender dimension to the resistance that Scott highlighted and discussed (1991, pp.94-118; see also Redden and Terry 2013, p. 249, fn.2).

to express resistance and agency, in particular with the assistance of various nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) (Ford and Piper 2007, pp.63-79). As they highlight, ‘female migrant workers, especially foreign domestic workers (FDWs) who comprise the majority of women migrants in Asia, are generally portrayed as having little to no agency in the world economy’ (Ford and Piper 2007, p.63). And further that ‘scholars of Asian migration have traditionally conceived of female migrant workers as either passive victims of global power structures (emphasising macroeconomic ‘demand and supply’ dynamics) or isolated actors exerting micro agency through acts of ‘everyday resistance’, while regulatory international political economy (RIPE) scholarship failed to consider them at all’ (Ford and Piper 2007, p.63). Thus, Ford and Piper argue that ‘...while substantial evidence exists that reveals the extent to which the human and labour rights of FDWs are violated in East and Southeast Asia (Piper and Iredale 2003), it is wrong to portray these workers as either passive bearers of the weight of global structures or simply the objects of transnational advocacy campaigns (Keck and Sikkink 1998)’ (2007, p.63).

Following from this, Ford and Piper—utilizing an EIPE approach—assert that the acts of agency and resistance (which occur at both the individual, as well as collective level) on the part of FDWs possess the potential to have significant impacts on international structures (2007, p.63). As they explain, ‘when combined with the campaigns of middle-class activists associated with the NGOs acting both within national boundaries and across them, these attempts at defiance constitute an informal regime that interacts with—and has the potential to influence—the formal industrial relations and immigration

regimes that seek to control and regulate foreign domestic labour at the national and international levels' (Ford and Piper 2007, p.63). However, in presenting this argument, Ford and Piper are also cautious to outline the myriad limitations and restrictions these workers face—both at a local or national, as well as international level—in expressing their discontent and exercising agency (2007, pp.66-79). Yet, despite the existence of such formidable obstacles, their work serves to bring to light the ways in which FDWs are able to find ways to negotiate and maneuver within such limitations in an effort to gain greater control over their lives (Ford and Piper 2007, p.79). Thus, in highlighting both the gendered global division of labour which serves to structure foreign domestic work,⁷³ as well as the ways in which gendered FDWs seek to improve their conditions by exerting agency and resistance within the sphere of the everyday, Ford and Piper begin the important work of unpacking the complicated relationships that exist between gender, the everyday, and the international. However, the authors present no formal argument to include such a task as required element or aim of the EIPE model itself, despite the fact that their work strongly speaks to the necessity of doing so.

Ara Wilson's chapter also speaks to the need to place central analytical importance on gender, as well as other intersecting 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303) in examining

⁷³ As Ford and Piper note 'migrant labour's position within regional economies cannot, of course, be divorced from regional patterns of capitalism and the labour regimes embedded in them, nor from their gendered nature. Domestically, patriarchal gender ideology and a strong sense of hierarchy in the countries of the region that produce employment opportunities and entitlements segregated by sex. Migrant labour is affected in the same manner. Male migrants have been mobilised mainly in productive jobs in construction and manufacturing industries, while female migrants are largely concentrated in reproductive jobs in the household and the commercial service sectors (Yamanaka and Piper 2004)' (2007, pp.64-65).

the relationship between the everyday and the international. In her chapter, Wilson incorporates ‘feminist theory and post-colonial approaches’ in an effort to investigate the role of ‘Asian agency in the making of modernity in Thailand’ (2007, p.160). As she states, her chapter serves to ‘...challeng[e] the Eurocentric view that Asian modernity has been constructed by, or is the derivative of the West’ (Wilson 2007, p.160). Further, she asserts ‘...that Asian modernity has been significantly produced by the agency of the Chinese diaspora and trans-Asian flows’ (Wilson 2007, p.160). Wilson explains that in the chapter she ‘...present[s] an extended discussion of one major Sino-Thai family business in order to illustrate the grounded practices and processes—including kinship and gender relations—behind capitalist development in Thailand’ (2007, p.160). As Wilson argues, ‘the formal economy of Thailand has been intertwined with, and dependent on, informal realms of kinship, households, gender and ethnicity’ (2007, p.171). She notes that women within the Chirathivat family—which serves as the focus of her analysis—contributed in many ways to the family business, through both ‘explicit productive labour’ as well as through ‘social reproduction’ (Wilson 2007, p.171). She explains that ‘both informal and formal education [on the part of women in the family] prepared the next generation of family workers’ (Wilson 2007, pp.171-172). Thus, she asserts, it is of the utmost importance to recognize the fact ‘...that Asian families—including wives and daughters—were innovative agents in economic development’ (Wilson 2007, p.173). In doing so, Wilson places the importance of gender (as well as other ‘social identities’ (Shields 2008, p.303), such as ethnicity) front and center in the analysis of the everyday and its interconnections with the international.

However, Wilson, like Ford and Piper, stops short of explicitly arguing for the EIPE model itself to include factors such as gender as central analytical concerns. Nevertheless, the chapters that Ford and Piper, as well as Wilson, contributed to Hobson and Seabrooke's edited volume represent important first steps in thinking through what an explicitly feminist EIPE (or FEPGE) model might look like, and how it might be operationalized to study everyday actors and actions and their relationship to the international. In outlining a FEPGE model of inquiry in the next section I will be building on the insights that their chapters have provided. However, I argue that considerations of gender—as well as other important 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303), such as ethnicity (as Wilson highlights)—are central to studying *all* topics within IPE, and therefore, all applications of the 'EIPE' model (and indeed the model itself) should be gendered. Through utilizing this approach I was able to better capture the ways in which gender (and other factors, such as age) matters at the everyday level of the transnational call center workplace, and how workers resist within this gendered labour structure, as well as challenge it. As I outline in chapters four and five (especially with the typology of gendered resistance practices presented in the latter), I was able to make the connection between the larger gendered division of labour within the global economy—which sees women as particularly suited for certain types of labour, based on gendered notions of skill, such as the service labour performed in call centers—and the ways in which workers' opportunities for resistance are subsequently gendered as well.

2.2 Feminist IPE and IR Scholars Theorize Gender, the Everyday, and the International

While Hobson and Seabrooke's model represents a vitally important effort to broaden what gets included in studies of the international, they were by no means the first scholars to lodge such a challenge. Feminist IR and IPE scholars have long been part of an effort to broaden what is included or seen as important and worthy of study in regard to the international (Elias 2010, p.608; see also Desai 2009, pp.1-11; Rege 2003, pp.4560-4561). As such, the current 'Everyday IPE' field, as defined by Hobson and Seabrooke (2010),⁷⁴ owes a serious debt to earlier feminist scholarship. Although, much of this scholarship has failed to acknowledge that the importance of the everyday in relation to the international had already been well established by feminist IR and IPE scholars (notably, Cynthia Enloe 2000[1989]; 2004) for several decades (Elias 2010; LeBaron 2010; Davies and Niemann 2002). As LeBaron asserts, 'there is a significant overlap between the method and concerns of the 'Everyday IPE' literature and those that have historically characterized feminist political economy' (2010, p.891).⁷⁵ However, despite this, she

⁷⁴ Hobson and Seabrooke (2010) discuss at length several examples of current Everyday IPE scholarship. These include Amoore (2002), Langley (2007, 2008), Paterson (2007), and Broome (2009). It is notable that feminist work is not discussed in the context of this overview of the field. However, other scholars have sought to include feminist work within their definition of the field of Everyday IPE. Watson (2013) for example includes work by Elias (2004), Franklin (2004), and Watson (2009) in his characterization of the field. This point was noted by Juanita Elias while I was completing revisions for my article—which represents a shorter version of the arguments and material presented here in my dissertation—for the *Globalizations* special issue (for which she served as the editor, along with Adrienne Roberts) on feminist global political economies of the everyday.

⁷⁵ More specifically she notes, 'both 'Everyday IPE' and feminist political economy are fundamentally concerned with an exploration of the ways in which the ontology of the social is reconstituted over time, and the ways that political economic shifts impact, and are impacted by, human beings' daily life' (LeBaron 2010, p.891).

continues, “Everyday IPE’ has rarely drawn on feminist insights or directed attention to spheres of historically feminist concern; most notably the household’ (LeBaron 2010, p. 891). One possible reason for this is that while feminist scholars have long been engaged in work that can undoubtedly be categorized as ‘everyday IPE,’ much of it has not been named, or explicitly identified, as such.⁷⁶

Cynthia Enloe challenged scholars to go beyond the ‘center’ and look at the ‘periphery’ or ‘margins’ of international politics in an effort to more fully recognize the ‘amounts and varieties of power that it takes to form and sustain any given set of relationships between states’ (2004, p.19; see also Enloe 2000 [1989]; Elias 2010, p.608; Davies and Niemann 2002, p.560, fn.11). Enloe further asserts, ‘underestimating the amounts and kinds of power operating in the world is the hallmark of *non*feminist analysis’ (Enloe 2000 [1989], p.xiv, emphasis in original). Both Hobson and Seabrooke and Enloe argue that everyday, local actions should actually be viewed as ‘big and important things’ because they play a crucial role in creating, maintaining, or even disrupting the larger processes and structures that traditional IPE has focused its attention on (see Enloe 2004, p.19-42 and Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.1-24 and 196-213). However, unlike Hobson and Seabrooke, Enloe also argues that gender relations should be considered as a vitally important aspect of IR and IPE scholarship as well (2004, pp.135, 93-95, 123). Putting gender at the center of analysis is of critical importance because, as Peterson asserts, “all of social life is gendered’: we experience and act in the world as gendered subjects, and

⁷⁶ This was noted by Christine B. N. Chin who served as my panel discussant at the 2013 ISA Annual Convention where I presented an earlier version of this paper.

the categories through which we understand and act upon the world are shaped by gendered meanings' (1992, p.195).

The importance of employing a feminist approach in studying international politics and the global economy cannot be overstated.⁷⁷ Utilizing such an approach allows scholars to 'challenge [certain] basic assumptions' (Jaggar 2008, p. viii; see also Cook and Fonow 1986, p.23; Peterson 1992, p.186) underlying the subfield of IPE—primarily the idea that only those spaces and actors that have traditionally been viewed as 'big things' matter when analyzing the global economy (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.1; Paterson 1999, p.2). Feminist scholars as early as the 1970s presented similar challenges to the field of International Relations (IR), more generally. As Murphy notes, feminist academics, such as Bernice Carroll, asserted that IR scholars' knowledge of 'international society' would benefit greatly by directing their 'gaze from the few putatively powerful actors in world affairs to the many who are putatively powerless,' and that in doing so it would require 'revis[ing] key concepts in order to capture the contributions of women to the structuring of international society' (Murphy 1996, p.513; see also Enloe 2004, p.19 and Enloe 2000 [1989]). Much of the current 'regulatory' IPE scholarship being produced leaves itself

⁷⁷ This is not to imply that there is, or should be, only one singular feminist approach. As Campbell and Wasco (2000, p.775) explain, 'the term "feminism" implies that there is one feminism, when, in fact, there are multiple feminisms. These feminisms are similar in that they focus on the experiences of women's lives and the oppression of women in this culture, yet they are different in how they conceptualize that marginalization. There are four main types of feminism that have been articulated in academic discourse: liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, and womanism.' Here I adopt a feminist approach that places central analytical importance on the everyday experiences and understandings of women (in particular women workers), as well as highlights the central role that gender relations play in structuring and maintaining the global political economy.

open to many of the same criticisms. Sylvester also importantly notes—in outlining her ‘empathetic cooperation’ methodology—that ‘perhaps women’s daily activities, assignments, and maybe even ways of knowing and being—which are mostly outside the scrutiny of social theory—could fill in many gaps of knowledge created through the impartial gaze of science’ (1994, p.316). Similarly, Thapan notes, ‘beginning from experience is beginning from the ‘real’, as it were, from everyday life, and from what may be considered women’s realities which have remained unexplored and therefore invisible to us’ (1995, p.45).

Catherine Boyle—in constructing a lesson plan for an introductory sociology class on gender—suggests that the best way to make the processes of ‘genderization’ and ‘gender stratification’ visible to students is to have them visit a ‘familiar’ location (in her case a shopping mall) and make them ‘...aware of gender in their everyday lives’ (1995, p.150). Boyle asserts that it is important to engage in ‘active learning’ exercises such as this, as ‘...gender has become such a deeply ingrained part of life that we hardly notice it. Gender is so close to us it remains unexamined’ (Boyle 1995, p.150). Once students have had a chance to complete this exercise, Boyle explains that ‘[she] urge[s] students to think “beyond the mall.” After observing how we take the genderization of the mall for granted, it is less difficult to see how we overlook gender issues in other areas of our lives’ (1995, p.152). Boyle’s lesson is an important one for students, and one that is equally pertinent to scholarly studies that place importance on the sphere of the everyday. To not fully interrogate and examine how gender informs, structures, and affects the everyday is to be left with a grossly incomplete picture of the international. In particular, as this

dissertation seeks to demonstrate, by looking at how the everyday space of the call center workplace is gendered—in large part because of larger problematic conceptions of gendered skill—and how worker resistance practices are subsequently gendered as a result, we are able to get a fuller, and more accurate, picture of the current global political economic landscape.

Carla Freeman argues that even the way that we view (and define) globalization, as scholars, can be highly problematic.⁷⁸ She asserts that ‘not only has globalization *theory* been gendered masculine, but the very processes defining globalization itself [...] are implicitly ascribed a masculine gender’ (Freeman 2001, p.1008, emphasis in original). She argues that in many of the major scholarly works produced on globalization ‘two interconnected patterns have emerged: the erasure of gender as integral to social and economic dimensions of globalization when framed at the macro, or “grand theory”, level and an implicit masculinization of these macrostructural models’ (Freeman 2001, p.1008). She contends that this this has led to ‘...the implicit, but powerful, dichotomous model in which the gender of globalization is mapped in such a way that global: masculine as

⁷⁸ Acker similarly problematizes current understandings of globalization. As she explains, ‘the dominant discourse on globalization that describes and theorizes the above changes has a hidden commonality: gender and often race are invisible. Globalization is presented as gender neutral, even though some theorists do pay some attention to women, the family and women’s employment (e.g. Castells 2000). This ostensible gender neutrality masks the “implicit masculinization of these macro-structural models” (Freeman 2001; see also Ward 1993). The implicit masculine standpoint in the ruling relations (Smith 1987) from which theories of society have been constructed impedes adequate analysis. For example, unpaid caring, household, and agricultural labor, along with much informal economic activity that maintains human life (Elson 1994; Mies 1986), do not enter the analyses or are assumed to be in unlimited supply. The omission of, mostly women’s unpaid work seriously biases discussions of the penetration of capitalist globalizing processes and limits understanding of both negative consequences and potentials for opposition (Bergeron 2001; Gibson-Graham 2002’ (2004, pp.19-20).

local: feminine’ (Freeman 2001, p.1008; see also Ley 2004, p.155; Mountz and Hyndman 2006, p.449). In light of this, Freeman argues for a ‘feminist reconceptualization of globalization,’ in which globalization is not understood as ‘unidirectional,’ but rather fully acknowledges both the effects that the international has on the everyday (or local) and the ways in which the local (or everyday) effects the international (2001, p.1013, p.1031). As Freeman further explains,

a feminist reconceptualization of this sort requires a stance toward globalization in which the arrows of change are imagined in more than one direction, and where gender is interrogated not only in the practices of men and women in local sites but also in the ways in which both abstract and tangible global movements and processes are ascribed masculine or feminine value (2001, p.1013).

Freeman’s exploration of the relationships between gender, the local (or everyday), and the international closely relates to the goals of the FEPGE framework. It is of the utmost importance to not only focus on the everyday (or in Freeman’s terms, the local) as a ‘feminine’ site which is only acted on by global forces—indeed this was also a central point of Hobson and Seabrooke’s EIPGE model—but rather as a site that can have significant effects on the global level as well. Following from this, multi-directionality (as will be explored in more depth below) is adopted as a central part of the FEPGE model.

Mountz and Hyndman similarly argue for the need to take into account the ways in which the global and the intimate ‘constitute one another’ (2006, p.446).⁷⁹ As they explain,

⁷⁹ Mountz and Hyndman make use of the language of ‘the intimate’ rather than the ‘the local,’ due to the ‘limits of local/global binaries’ (2006, p.446). However, in the

‘...we aim to show that the intimate is inextricable from the global. They are neither separate spheres nor bounded subjects. Rather, they constitute places such as the border, the home, and the body’ (Mountz and Hyndman 2006, p.448). They assert that it is crucial to acknowledge and examine the ways in which the global and the intimate (or everyday) are closely related. They state ‘most feminist analyses of globalization would assume the everyday engagements of women and men, including the ways in which relations of work and play, production and consumption, defy any fixed or given scale: they are at once connected to global and local processes, politics and people’ (Mountz and Hyndman 2006, p.449). They also highlight the problematic fact that in many discussions of globalization people are simply absent altogether, a fact which they seek to address in their work (Mountz and Hyndman 2006, p.449). Mountz and Hyndman, in particular, focus on the body as a site of analysis, in relation to the global (2006, p.451). They state that ‘the scale of the body—whether interpreted as the bodies of women raped by soldiers fighting for their nation during war or those who work in foreign countries as live-in caregivers and maids—allows one to explore global processes as intimate phenomenon’ (Mountz and Hyndman 2006, p.451). They continue, by noting that ‘feminists “recover place, but not to celebrate experience or the local per se, but rather to ‘reveal a local that is constitutively global’ [Katz 2001, 1214]”’ (Mountz and Hyndman

introduction to the special issue of *Women Studies Quarterly* that their article appears in, Pratt and Rosner pose a much more pointed critique of the use of the dichotomous terms local and global. They explain that, ‘in exchanging the local for the intimate, we hope to avoid what we see as a false opposition by employing terms that are not defined *against* one another but rather draw meaning from domains that appear to be separate’ (Pratt and Rosner 2006, pp. 16-17, emphasis in original). I find the use of the term ‘the local’—used in relation to the global—far less problematic. What is needed is a more multidirectional—rather than a strictly binary—understanding of the local and the global, rather than abandoning the terminology altogether.

2006, p.451). Thus, as they highlight, one cannot truly understand the international or the global if proper attention is not paid to the ways in which these spheres are related—indeed, entangled—with the everyday (or the intimate, to use Mountz and Hyndman’s terminology). Their work also speaks to the importance of investigating how gender is bound up in the relationships between these spheres (Mountz and Hyndman 2006, p.449).

Enloe, in arguing that ‘the personal is international’ and that ‘international is personal,’ similarly highlights the multidirectional—not to mention highly gendered—ways in which the everyday spaces and the international forces can be seen to impact each other (2000 [1989], p.196). As she explains, ‘read forward, ‘the personal is international’ insofar as ideas about what it means to be a ‘respectable’ woman or and ‘honorable’ man have been shaped by colonizing policies, trading strategies and military doctrines’ (2000 [1989], p.196, see also Steans 1999, pp.115-117). In stating this, Enloe importantly highlights the ways in which ‘personal power relationships’ as well as ‘ideas about masculinity and femininity’ have become ‘internationalized’ (2000 [1989], p.196). Enloe further explicates that, ‘the implications of a feminist understanding of international politics are thrown into sharper relief when one reads ‘the personal is international’ the other way around: *the international is personal*’ (2000 [1989], p.196, emphasis in original). Here, she refers to—and vitally sheds light on—the ways in which ‘governments depend on certain kinds of allegedly private relationships in order to conduct foreign affairs’ (2000 [1989], p.196).⁸⁰ Thus, the everyday actions of men and

⁸⁰ Enloe further explains that ‘governments need more than secrecy and intelligence agencies; they need wives who are willing to provide their diplomatic husbands with unpaid services so those men can develop trusting relationships with other diplomatic

women—which, as Enloe points out, are informed and structured by specific ideas of masculinity femininity—have very real impacts on the international level. As Enloe makes clear, and as I hope to further elucidate with the construction of a FEPGE model, IPE and IR scholars must pay close attention to the complex relationships between gender, the everyday, and the international, in order to understand more fully international politics and the global economy.

Sharmila Rege also outlines the importance of being attentive to gendered everyday sites and actors. Rege argues that one cannot fully understand globalization without first considering the significance of gender, or by casting the focus to the local and everyday (2003, p.4561). Also, similar to Freeman (2001), as well as Mountz and Hyndman (2006), Rege highlights the need to see everyday sites and actors as having important effects on the international. She explains that ‘the challenge is to move to a feminist reconceptualisations of globalisation whereby the local and the situated underlined by feminist analyses is not merely seen as ‘effects’ but constitutive ingredients of the processes of globalisation’ (Rege 2003, p.4561). As Steans notes, ‘feminist analysis shows that structures and agency can only be understood by examining the linkages between the public and private,’ and as many feminist IR and IPE scholars have highlighted, this also goes for the linkages between the local or everyday and the international (1999, p.118, 122).

husbands. They need not only military hardware, but a steady supply of women’s sexual services to convince the soldiers that they are manly. To operate in the international arena, governments seek other governments’ recognition of their sovereignty; but they also depend on ideas about masculinized dignity and feminized sacrifice to sustain that sense of autonomous nationhood’ (2000 [1989], pp.196-197).

Ronnie Lipschutz has also attempted to rectify the lack of attention paid to the everyday and the importance and meaning of gender within the space of the everyday. Lipschutz—building on critical feminist theory and historical materialism, along with a conception of the ‘social individual’ and the ‘construction of political space’—set about constructing a ‘people-based’ global political economy framework (2000, p.142). As he explains, ‘in my approach to global political economy, I want to examine the ways in which social individuals construct the political spaces within which they have agency. While this might appear a banal exercise, it actually facilitates an understanding of why, even as structures constrain, agents can act’ (Lipschutz 2000, p.151). His framework importantly accords central analytical importance to gender, and its relation to the everyday. He explains that we must be ‘...sensitive to the ways in which everyday ideas and practices are permeated not only by masculinist systems of power that reproduce themselves and produce the subjects they control, but also by a naturalized and gendered ontology of human subjectivity’ (2000, p.145). Ultimately, in conducting an analysis of everyday spaces and actors (or ‘social individuals’) Lipschutz asserts ‘...that we may begin to see how we act and are acted upon by the variety of structures and power relations that constitute and constrain, but do not close down everyday life’ (2000, p.157).⁸¹ This is closely related to the arguments put forward by several of the other feminist scholars discussed above.

⁸¹ Similar to Lipschutz, Watson highlights that ‘in the writings of de Certeau the everyday can be a site of resistance, revolution and transformation despite the strictures imposed by those in power’ (2011, p.50).

By opening up our analysis to everyday spaces and actors, and by investigating the ways in which gender relations of power affect the everyday, we can begin to get a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the everyday and the international. Everyday actors may be constrained and limited as a result of gendered power relations, however, their actions can be seen to both constitute, as well as potentially disrupt, the global political economy. In addition, those actions may also ultimately serve to challenge and undermine said power relations.⁸² In line with the sentiments expressed by Hobson and Seabrooke with the formulation of their EIKE model (as well as Scott's formulation of 'everyday forms of resistance'), Watson crucially highlights that, 'our everyday actions also have important consequences for the constitution and transformation of the local, national, regional and global contexts. How, what and with whom we spend, save, invest, buy and produce in our everyday lives shapes markets and in turn how states intervene in them...' (2011, p.42).

Christine Sylvester (1996)—whose work Hobson and Seabrooke cite, but do not explore in depth—has provided perhaps one of the most clear and comprehensive outlines of the monumental contributions that feminist IR and IPE scholars have made in theorizing the relationships between gender, the everyday, and the international. In a chapter outlining

⁸² For an excellent example of how everyday actions, such as everyday acts of resistance, or 'hidden transcripts of resistance,' can lead up to creating larger changes in the workplace and beyond see Murphy's (1998) analysis of flight attendant resistance practices, in particular her discussion of how a few flight attendants went from quietly resisting (e.g. through the use of the airline's strict 'weight standards,' to openly challenging them by taking legal action against their employer, which led to considerable media coverage, ultimately pressuring the company to revise its policies (and in addition, almost all other airlines followed suit soon after this, ultimately leading to industry wide changes) (pp. 525-532).

feminist contributions to the field of IR, Sylvester observes that there are ‘...two, major albeit overlapping, manifestations of feminist theorising’ within the field (1996, p.262). As she explains, the first form of feminist theorizing—and indeed the form of feminist theorizing that is of central concern to the dissertation at hand—is “‘everyday forms of feminist theorising’⁸³—pirating James Scott’s (1985) notion of everyday forms of resistance and struggle—issue from activities of average people, as interpreted by feminist analysts’ (Sylvester 1996, p.262). The other form of theorizing, in contrast, ‘...*inlines* identity in international politics with respect to shapes that surround men and women in theories and practices, ‘leaving behind, in the middle so to speak’, shadows of gender and boundaries of gender transgressed’ (Sylvester 1996, p.263, emphasis in original). I focus here on the latter form of theorizing, as it is of particular relevance—and import—to this dissertation. As Sylvester states ‘this form *outlines* women, power and international politics where this gender triangle was not presumed to exist. It is an alternative form of realism that seeks to get the real right’ (1996, pp.262-263, emphasis in original). This body of feminist IR and IPE scholarship has served to openly challenge many central assumptions within the fields of IR and IPE and posed many vitally important questions about who and what should be seen as important in studies of the international. As Sylvester highlights,

⁸³ Unsurprisingly, Sylvester situates Enloe’s work within this category of feminist theorizing. She states ‘...everyday forms of theorising recuperate women and their experiences of power and agency from the kitchens of diplomatic services, from marketing logos, secretarial pools, solitary places in graduate schools, and from between-the-lines narratives of disciplinary texts. Although she does not use the term ‘everyday feminist theorising’, Enloe is a chief proponent of this approach’ (1996, p.263).

[with everyday feminist theorising] real women and real men turn the levers of international politics while the field of International Relations gathers in planetariums to look for the important actors ‘out there’. Because everydayness has been such a neglected focus, we have much to learn, such as about the many women who strolled through the Berlin Wall in November of 1989 and helped change the face of post-Second World War international relations. Xenophobic male ‘skinheads’ fascinate more than relations-changing women and children (Enloe 1991) at the walls of international politics. How odd. (1996, p.267; see also Watson 2011, p.40).

For these feminist scholars everyday gendered actors are important and impact the international, and as such, it is necessary to pay attention to them. It is of the utmost importance that we interrogate these sites and actors in relation to each other, and interrogate the relations of power that structure these sites. In the next section I engage in my own project of ‘everyday feminist theorizing’ that builds heavily on the feminist insights outlined in this section.

2.3 Constructing the Feminist Everyday Politics of the Global Economy (FEPGE) Approach

Below I begin to sketch and construct an explicitly feminist EIPE (or feminist everyday politics of the global economy (FEPGE)) analytical framework. In doing so, it is my aim to highlight—in line with Hobson and Seabrooke (2007), Enloe (2011), Elias (2010), and Guillaume (2011a, 2011b)—the need to for traditional IPE scholars to broaden the scope of actors that are included in analyses of the global political economy and to pay serious attention to the ways in which gender affects the everyday, as well as to broaden the scope of spaces and actors included in discussions of within the global economy.

However, in constructing this model I aim to go beyond Hobson and Seabrooke’s initial EIPE model by asserting the need to take seriously the importance of the relationships

between gender and the everyday spaces and actors that serve as the central sites of analysis under this framework. As outlined in the previous section, the argument for paying serious attention to gender in relation to the international is not new. In fact, this has been well established (and importantly theorized) in a rich body of feminist IR and IPE scholarship. Below I endeavor to take on board these feminist insights and use them as a starting point in undertaking a feminist re-reading and interpretation of Hobson and Seabrooke's model.

While there are commonalities between the EIPE and the FEPGE approach, I argue that there are several ways that the EIPE model can be expanded and improved through the incorporation of feminist IR and IPE insights (see table 1 below).⁸⁴ First and foremost, the model must include a central focus on the relationship between gender (along with a focus on other intersecting 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303)) and everyday actions. Simply to focus on the relationships between the everyday and international, without interrogating or analyzing the role that gender plays in informing these spheres ultimately leads to an incomplete picture. This, as I explain, requires researchers to ask different questions than Hobson and Seabrooke have outlined. Second, feminist IR and IPE scholarship has much to offer in regard to theorizing the multi-directionality of the relationships between the everyday and the international, which is a central element in Hobson and Seabrooke's model. Here, feminist research can be incorporated in order to more fully understand these relationships, as well as provide an account that is attentive

⁸⁴ This table is adapted, and expanded, from Table 1.1 in Hobson and Seabrooke (2007, p.6), in which they compare their EIPE approach with variants of 'Regulatory IPE.' Here I have used some of the category titles listed by Hobson and Seabrooke in constructing my table, for the sake of continuity.

to the gendered dimensions of the multi-directional relationships between the everyday and the international (as, for example, Freeman’s (2001) work importantly does). Finally, with the formulation of the FEPGE approach I move away from Hobson and Seabrooke’s tripartite categorization of everyday resistance and action, and instead propose maintaining the conceptualization of everyday resistance put forth by Scott, that allowed for resistance to be placed along a continuum between hidden, individual action and open, collective protest. However, in line with my argument regarding the feminization of resistance practices within the transnational call center setting, I assert that there is a need to also consider how this spectrum can (and should) be viewed as gendered.

Table 1: Comparing and contrasting Hobson and Seabrooke’s EIPE approach with the FEPGE approach

	Hobson and Seabrooke’s EIPE framework (2007)	FEPGE Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘unit of analysis’ 	<p>‘everyday actors interacting with elites and structures’ (p.6)</p>	<p>everyday actors with varying social identities and locations that structure and inform their actions ‘interacting with elites and structures’ (p.6).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘organising question(s)’ 	<p>‘who acts and how do their actions constitute and transform the world economy in its multiple spatial dimensions?’ (p.12)</p>	<p><i>who acts—and how are their actions informed and structured by their social identities and locations—and how do their gendered actions constitute and transform the world economy (and the problematic global gendered division of labour the structures it) in its multiple spatial dimensions?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘conception of change’ & the organization of forms of everyday resistance and action 	<p>everyday resistance and action are organized and understood through a tripartite categorization which includes: ‘defiance, mimetic challenge, and axiorationality’ (p.6)</p>	<p>- does not reject Hobson and Seabrooke’s tripartite ‘bottom up’ conceptualization and classification of resistance, action, and change (in fact, there is some overlap between the two approaches)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relationship between everyday and global • ‘epistemology’ • ‘prime empirical focus’ • ‘locus of agency, level of analysis, ontology’ 	<p>‘a central purpose of the EIKE is neither to marginalise the importance of the dominant, nor to reify the agency of the weak. Rather it is to analyse the interactive relationship between the two; one that in many ways constitutes a dialogical, negotiative relationship’ (p.15)</p> <p>‘interpretivist/post-positivist and rationalist’ (p.6)</p> <p>‘social transformative <i>and</i> regulatory processes enacted, or informed by everyday actions’ (p.6)</p> <p>‘bottom up, complex/wholistic, agential or structuationalist’ (p.6)</p>	<p>-however, with this approach, everyday resistance is organized and understood though the lens of a gendered ‘spectrum of resistance’ (Tripp 1997, p.5), which builds on Scott’s understanding (1993, pp.93-94) of resistance, that better serves to highlight the gendered opportunity structures of resistance within particular feminized industries</p> <p>in line with feminist scholars such as Enloe (2000 [1989]) and (Freeman 2001) the multidirectional relationship between the everyday and the global is understood as highly gendered</p> <p>feminist epistemology that places central focus on women and men’s subjective understandings of their everyday experiences, that are ‘located, and analyzed, within broader relations of ruling or social structures’ (Smith 1987, 1999, cited in Doucet and Mauthner 2006, p.37)</p> <p>same, with an emphasis on interrogating and examining the gendered nature of these everyday actions</p> <p>same, with an emphasis on gender</p>
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Jill Steans, in investigating the ‘potential and limitations of critical global political economy (GPE) in understanding gender relations and feminist politics’ (1999, p.113), ultimately concluded that ‘...there is much value in a GPE framework as a starting point for understanding feminist politics, but that there are also important constraints’ (Steans

1999, p.125). The FEPGE model, with its central focus on the relationships between *gendered* everyday spaces and actors and the international begins to, as Steans highlighted, ‘rethink,’ some of the central assumptions within existing IPE or GPE scholarship. Hobson and Seabrooke, in outlining the EIPE model, have crucially served to cast the attention of scholars to the everyday spaces and actors, and in doing so made important inroads in questioning the assumptions of traditional IR and IPE scholarship. However, as the feminist IR and IPE scholarship outlined in the previous section makes clear, this project is incomplete without also attending to the central importance of the relationships between gender and the everyday. To have one without the other is to continue to have an incomplete picture of the international.

For example, to not acknowledge and investigate the degree to which workers’ lives within transnational manufacturing and service industries are structured and informed by gendered meanings, ‘tropes,’ and power relations at the everyday level, as well as within the international sphere (Salzinger 2003; Elson and Pearson 1981; Elias 2005; Moghadam 1999; Bonds 2006; Mulholland 2002; Freeman 2001)⁸⁵ would result in highly impoverished and incomplete understandings of how the global political economy is actually structured and functions. As Moghadam notes, ‘the global economy is maintained by *gendered labor*, with definitions of skill, allocation of resources, occupational distribution, and modes of remuneration shaped by asymmetrical gender

⁸⁵ For example, Salzinger asserts that the Mexican maquiladora industry is shaped by, what she terms a ‘trope of productive femininity’ (2003, pp. 14-15), that refers to the ‘notion of the “always-already” docile, dexterous and cheap woman’ (2003, p.10). Bonds similarly explains that the transnational call center industry is shaped by gendered ‘tropes’ which rely heavily on the supposed emotional and caring qualities of women (2006, p.237).

relations and by gender ideologies defining the roles and rights men and women and of the relative value of their labor' (1999, p.379, emphasis in original). Thus, scholars wishing to gain a more nuanced picture of the global political economy must pay attention to how gender operates both within the everyday, as well as the international, and must in turn seek to understand the relationships between these gendered spheres, as I explore in the context of the transnational call center industry, in chapters four and five. Balka aptly notes that 'in the absence of an analysis of the everyday labour (both paid and unpaid) it is easy to "miss" the significance of sex in political economy' (2002, p.62).

However, it also crucial for a FEPGE model to be attentive to other 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303) that serve to structure the everyday and the international, as well as the relationships between the two. The FEPGE model aims to be sensitive to 'the simultaneous operation of multiple systems of power' that exist, and ultimately inform, people's everyday lived experiences (Dill et. al 2007, p.629). This means paying close attention to the multiple and intersecting 'constructions of inequality' based on considerations such as class, race, religion, sexuality, as well as age, that are crucial parts of people's experiences and identities, in addition to gender (Jaggar 2008, p.vii; see also Dill et. al 2007, pp.629-637; Paterson 1999, p.12; Ackerly and True 2010, p.469; Waylen 2006, p.149; Shields 2008; Nash 2008). Here, the FEPGE model incorporates an 'intersectional' approach to studying both women's and men's everyday experiences, and their relationship to the broader global economic context. Intersectionality can be defined as 'the notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class, and sexuality [as well as a host of other identities]' (Nash 2008, p.2). As

Shields explains, ‘intersectionality, the mutually constitutive relations among social identities, has become a central tenet of feminist thinking, one that McCall (2005) and others have suggested is the most important contribution of feminist theory to our present understanding of gender’ (2008, p.301). She continues, noting that, ‘the intersectionality perspective further reveals that the individual’s social identities profoundly influence one’s beliefs about and experience of gender. As a result, feminist researchers have come to understand that the individual’s social location as reflected in intersecting identities must be at the forefront in any investigation of gender. In particular, gender must be understood in the context of power relations embedded in social identities’ (Shields 2008, p.301).

Thus, I assert that with the FEPGE researchers must start by expanding the central questions that Hobson and Seabrooke’s (2007) framework proposes (see table 1 above). Instead of beginning with the questions ‘who acts and how do their actions constitute and transform the world economy in its multiple spatial dimensions?’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.12), the FEPGE approach asks scholars to go further by investigating: who acts—*and how are their actions informed and structured by their social identities and locations*—and how do their *gendered* actions constitute and transform the world economy (and the problematic global gendered division of labour the structures it) in its multiple spatial dimensions? Here I do not wish to abandon the original questions posed by the EIPE model—indeed they are incredibly important—I simply wish to expand the areas of inquiry to include and capture the ways in which people’s social identities and locations impact their actions (and their opportunities for action).

While I focus centrally on gender in my analysis of everyday resistance within the transnational context (see chapter five), it is important to acknowledge that workers' experiences and gendered identities are also influenced and impacted by other 'social identities' such as age, race, sexuality (Shields 2008, p.303). Thus, while I discuss women workers in the context of the call center industry, it is understood that within this broad category, the individual experiences and identities of women workers vary greatly, while also sharing similarities in how their labour is understood and addressed within the transnational economic context that they are situated. In particular, in addition to gender (in the context of this study), workers' ages, familial roles and responsibilities, and even potentially their 'immigrant status' (Shields 2008, p.306) can also serve to impact their everyday experiences within the transnational call center workplace, and subsequently their abilities, opportunities, and willingness to resist in particular ways. In their respective applications of Hobson and Seabrooke's EIPPE model, Ford and Piper (2011) and Wilson (2011) have begun to incorporate several of these 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303) into the analysis of the everyday and the international. However, it is important that these considerations serve as a foundational element and focus of any EIPPE model.

The FEPGE model also serves to incorporate feminist theorizing on the multi-directionality of the relationships between the everyday and the international. In addition, it aims to be attentive to the ways in which these relationships are gendered. This key aspect of the FEPGE model is indeed presented as a central part of Hobson and

Seabrooke's formulation of EIPE. As they explain, '...a central purpose of the EIPE is neither to marginalise the importance of the dominant, nor to reify the agency of the weak. Rather it is to analyse the interactive relationship between the two; one that in many ways constitutes a dialogical, negotiative relationship' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.15). They further assert that the EIPE model recognises that 'it is therefore a two-way street that privileges neither but recognises the agency of both. This of course, takes us beyond the either/or framework of RIPE and of much heterodox IPE. Instead, it takes us into the realm of co-constitutive interactive social relations' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.15).

Freeman—similar to Hobson and Seabrooke—has argued that, 'globalization works through many economic and cultural modes and is effected both through large powerful actors and institutions as well as by "small-scale" individuals engaged in complex activities that are both embedded within and at the same time transforming practices of global capitalism' (2001, p.1008). She continues, asserting that, '...not only do global processes enact themselves on local ground but local processes and small-scale actors might be seen as the very fabric of globalization' (Freeman 2001, p.1009). However, as Freeman's work, as well as other feminist IR and IPE scholars' work suggests, the gendered nature of this multi-directionality must also be brought to light and studied. Freeman asserts that scholars must examine the ways in which the local, or everyday, and the international represent 'dialectically engaged' sites, but to do so in a way that serves to combat the dualism of local: feminine and global: masculine which she outlines (2001, p.1014). As she explains,

My aim therefore is twofold. First, I attempt to challenge the portrayal of the local as constrained within, and thus defined fundamentally by, the global. My second goal involves a decoupling of the link that has fused gender with the local and left the macropicture of globalization bereft of gender as a constitutive force (Freeman 2001, p.1012).

Thus, what is needed is an appreciation and awareness of the ways in which the everyday and the international are related in multi-directional ways, as well as a recognition of the ways in which gender impacts and structures each of these spaces, and perhaps influences how they relate to each other. In this dissertation, in particular, I explore the ways that larger notions of gendered skill create gendered divisions of labour within the global economy, which results in gendered opportunity structures of resistance for workers, and that, within these gendered spaces of resistance (at the everyday level of the transnational call center workplace) these gendered stereotypes are challenged, as are larger company policies and practices. By including gender as a central analytical category in relation to the study of the relationships between the everyday and the international, the FEPGE model aims to encourage such analyses. This focus is not new, rather it finds its foundations in the work of feminist IR and IPE scholars, such as Enloe, who early on observed and noted that ‘the personal is international’ and in turn, the ‘international is personal’ (2000 [1989], pp.195-201). In bringing these relationships and connections to light, Enloe made visible the fact that traditionally, ‘...the international system is made to look less complicated, less infused with power, less gendered than it really is’ (2000 [1989], p.199). The FEPGE model provides a way for the invaluable feminist theorizing and research that has already been conducted by Enloe and others to be incorporated with the vital work that Hobson and Seabrooke have begun in constructing an analytical model

of the international which is based on the experiences of everyday actors, within everyday spaces.

As noted, Hobson and Seabrooke offer a tripartite categorization of ‘everyday actions’ which serves to situate forms of everyday agency and actions into on the three following categories: ‘defiance agency,’ ‘mimetic challenge’ (both of which are seen as forms of resistance), and finally, ‘axiorational agency’ (which is not seen as a form of resistance, but rather represents ‘everyday agents go[ing] about their everyday business,’ which can in turn ‘inform the policies of great power political economy’) (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, pp.18-20). With the FEPGE I do not advocate abandoning these categorizations; indeed there is some overlap between these and the forms of action I discuss later in the dissertation. Rather, I suggest that if we are interested in bringing to light the ways that gender—and other social identities—structure the opportunities for resistance and action available to workers, organizing and understanding forms of everyday resistance through the lens of a gendered ‘spectrum of resistance’ (Tripp 1997, p.5) allows us to better visualize and acknowledge this. Here I build on Scott’s understanding (1993, pp.93-94) of resistance to suggest an organizational approach that better serves to highlight the gendered opportunity structures of resistance within particular feminized industries. As with Scott’s work, I also employ (and gender) the ‘spectrum of resistance’ (1993, pp.93-94) in an effort to push back against dichotomous understandings of worker resistance (which I explored in more depth in chapter one). As Scott argued, ‘there is a politics of daily resistance in practice, speech and thought that persists whether or not there are mass movements or rebellions and without which mass movements and rebellions cannot be

understood' (1993, p.94). Thus, we are better served by not adopting an either/or conception of individual and collective resistance, but rather, by viewing these actions along a continuum. Although, here, in line with my focus on gendered opportunity structure of resistance, this spectrum or continuum, must reflect the ways in which worker's social identities and locations serve to impact what forms of action they are able and willing to undertake to express their discontent. When this is accounted for, we are able to see that particular workers are more likely to resist in more everyday ways, and others in more open ways; even with the highly feminized transnational call center industry where open resistance is limited for all workers, as I explore in later chapters, some workers in this setting are still provided more opportunities to fight back against unfair and unjust working conditions and employer policies.

Conclusion

This dissertation clearly sets out what an explicitly feminist EIPE (or FEPGE) analytical framework could look like. It represents a move to expand and further build on Hobson and Seabrooke's original and innovative EIPE model. As I have argued throughout, what is needed is the inclusion of a greater awareness of gendered power relations and the role they play in structuring and informing everyday actions and interactions within the model. Hobson and Seabrooke's EIPE framework constitutes an important challenge to the narrow focus within traditional IPE and IR literature, which often excludes a focus on everyday sites and actors. Their model offers an important tool to change this. As they assert, 'in moving beyond the intellectual straightjacket of RIPE and the confines of heterodox theory by exploring EIPE, we reveal hitherto unexplored sites of agency by

discovering how everyday actions have an impact for the majority of peoples and, therefore, the world economy' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.23).

But, again, what is needed in addition to this is an EIPE model that recognizes and seeks to interrogate and analyze the extent to which the everyday is itself a gendered space within which gendered actors and their actions are structured and informed by gendered power relations. Thus, to not include gender as a central feature of a model aimed at exploring the importance of the everyday represents a major oversight, and it, in particular, leads scholars to an incomplete picture of the gendered nature of resistance within the current global political economic climate. As decades of rich and insightful IR and IPE feminist scholarship have made clear, we must be keenly aware and explore the ways in which gender factors into international politics and the global economy. In fact, feminist scholars from within these fields of study have already done important, indeed invaluable, intellectual work in examining the intimate relationships between gender, the everyday, and the international. Within this chapter—and this dissertation as a whole—I have sought to build on Hobson and Seabrooke's model by incorporating these crucial feminist insights. In later chapters (especially in chapter five) I outline, discuss, and analyze the findings of my research that was conducted in accordance with the FEPGE approach. However, in the following chapter I turn to an in depth discussion of the methods and methodology employed as part of this study.

Chapter Three: Methods and Methodology

As noted in the introduction, recently there has been considerable interest within International Relations (IR) and International Political Economy (IPE) in studying everyday spaces and actors in an effort to better understand global issues (Guillaume 2011⁸⁶, p.446; Elias 2010; LeBaron 2010; Davies and Niemann 2002; Davies 2006; Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, 2010; Redden and Terry 2013). However, while the importance of turning our scholarly gaze to the everyday in order to better understand the international has been established, the question of how to go about doing so from a methodological standpoint has received less attention. Authors such as Burawoy (2000) and Gowan and Ó Riain (2000) argue that there is great value in utilizing ethnographic methods—which are rooted in observing and analyzing everyday life—to better understand the processes and experiences of globalization. In fact, they outline what they term a ‘global ethnography’ approach to understanding international issues. As Gowan and Ó Riain explain, this approach is grounded in the idea that ‘...ethnography’s concern with concrete, lived experience can sharpen the abstractions of globalization theories into more precise and meaningful conceptual tools’ (2000, p.xiv). Although, while Burawoy et al.’s model presents a crucial call to adopt an ethnographic approach to understanding

⁸⁶ Other contributors to the *International Political Sociology* forum discussion on the importance of studying everyday spaces and actors to better understand the international (edited by Xavier Guillaume) include: Cynthia Enloe, Jesse Crane-Seeber, Mark B. Salter, and Leonard Seabrooke. See *International Political Sociology*, 5(4), 446-462, for the full set of contributions.

global issues, the question of how to go about actually doing this on the ground is less clear (particularly in cases where research settings are ‘closed-off’⁸⁷ to researchers). Originally, my research design for this project included both covert participant observation research, as well as semi-structured interviews with former call center employees, in order to obtain data about workers’ experiences and actions within the everyday space of the call center, and how those actions can be seen to constitute—as well as potentially disrupt—the global economy. However, as I discuss throughout this chapter, I modified this research design after being confronted with the ethical dimensions of undertaking covert research. I made the decision to exclude the data gained through this research in my dissertation, for reasons that I explore in detail in section two of this chapter, and use the information gained through a series of semi-structured interviews with former call center employees as my primary source of data (supplemented with information gained from anonymous online blog and discussion forum posts by call center workers). Although, as I discuss, my experiences and observations while working and researching in the transnational call center workplace strongly structured the types of questions I asked interviewees. While the covert participant observation data I collected is excluded from my dissertation, it was important to still include a discussion of my experiences with this research method here, as scholars wishing to make use of the analytical approach I outline (or an everyday IPE approach to research, in general) in chapter two will need to similarly grapple with the question of

⁸⁷ As Jorgensen explains, ‘a human setting is more or less *open* if access to it requires little negotiation. A setting is more or less *closed* if access requires considerable negotiation. Some settings are almost entirely closed to an overt research approach, leaving the participant observer with a decision to forgo investigation or to find some way to negotiate access covertly’ (1989, p.43, emphasis in original).

how best to uncover information about people's everyday lives and experiences, and consider fully the challenges that various methods for doing so present.

This study is a qualitative feminist case study of everyday worker resistance within Canadian transnational call centers, with a focus on how these everyday actions constitute—as well as potentially disrupt—the global economy. I used a feminist framework of analysis (outlined in the previous chapter) to structure and guide the research undertaken as part of this study. Several scholars have pointed out that there is not a singular agreed upon feminist methodological approach to research (Doucet and Mauthner 2006, p.40; Brooks and Hesse-Biber 2007, p.4; Maynard 1994, p.18). Indeed as Brooks and Hesse-Biber assert, 'just as we cannot reduce all women to one group with a uniform experience, race, class, or culture, there is no single method, methodology, or epistemology that informs feminist research' (2007, p.4). That said, many feminist researchers, especially standpoint feminist researchers⁸⁸, have foregrounded everyday experiences—particularly women's everyday experiences—in their work (Doucet and Mauthner 2006, p.37; Maynard and Purvis 1994, p.6; Maynard 1994, p.12). However, there are a number of issues to consider when conducting this type of research. As

⁸⁸ As Doucet and Mauthner explain, 'at the core of standpoint epistemology is their assertion that they represent the world from a particular socially situated perspective, which represents epistemic privilege or authority. This epistemic privileging is located in the standpoint of the marginalized or disadvantaged, and all women, regardless of social location, occupy this position. "Women's experiences, informed by feminist theory, provide a potential grounding for more complete and less distorted knowledge claims than do men's" (Harding 1987b:184; see also Hartstock 1983, 1985). Standpoint epistemology has continually emphasized how knowledge must begin in women's "everyday/evernight world" (Smith 1999:5; see also Smith 1987) and how women's lives are the "places from which to start off knowledge projects" (Harding 1991:61). Standpoint feminists have also been at pains to point out that these experiences, everyday/evernight worlds, or standpoints must also be located, and analyzed within broader relations of ruling or social structures (Smith 1987, 1999)" (2006, p.37).

Maynard asserts, ‘the legitimacy of women’s own understanding of their experiences is one of the hallmarks of feminism. An emphasis is not, however, unproblematic. To begin with there is no such thing as ‘raw’ experience. [...] People’s accounts of their lives are culturally embedded. Their descriptions are, at the same time, a construction of the events that occurred, together with an interpretation of them’ (1994, p.23). As I discuss later in this chapter, the various methods of data collection utilized as part of this study were all, to varying degrees, impacted by this. It should be noted, however, that even though participants’ accounts are not ‘unmediated,’ they are still valuable and deserve to be acknowledged (Atkinson 2006, pp.161-162). Maynard asserts that ‘although women’s experience may constitute a starting point for the production of feminist knowledge, it is not sufficient for understanding processes and practices through which this is organized. [...] Feminism has an obligation to go beyond citing experience in order to make connections which may not be visible from the purely experiential level alone’ (1994, pp.23-24). She continues, noting that, ‘when researching women’s lives we need to take their experience seriously, but we also, as Maureen Cain argues, need ‘to take our own theory seriously’ and ‘use the theory to make sense of...the experience’. This is an interpretive and synthesizing process which connects experience to understanding’ (Maynard 1994, pp.24, emphasis in original). I have focused on the everyday experiences of both male and female call center workers, and have taken these experiences seriously as a source of knowledge. I have also endeavored—through the use of the FEPGE approach—to make connections between participants’ everyday experiences and the broader global economy (in a multidirectional way), and further, to understand these experiences in the context of the patriarchal society and culture within which they occur.

As noted, multiple research methods were used to obtain data as part of this study. I have devoted a full chapter to this since it is important in order to give a full account of both phases of my research in order to understand fully the choices—in particular, choices around what data to include and exclude in my dissertation—made throughout. But it is also necessary in order to provide an opportunity for reflection on the choices social science researchers in general make. As Maynard and Purvis highlight, ‘autobiographical analyses of what it is actually like to do research can provide a useful insight into issues often hidden in conventional methodology textbooks’ (1994, p.1). Indeed, it is my hope that this discussion will be of some help to researchers who are considering similar methodological paths in the future.

In the first section I outline and discuss the series of semi-structured interviews that I conducted with former transnational call center employees. The information gathered through these interviews serves as the primary source of data for my dissertation. As this research was conducted openly, and included informed consent on the part of the participants, it represented a much less problematic (and controversial) method of obtaining data—both from an ethical and personal perspective than my first phase of research. Here I also discuss my use of data gathered from an anonymous online blogs and discussion forum to compliment, and expand on, the data gathered through the series of semi-structured interviews. In the second section I discuss my use of covert participant observation, and my reasons for ultimately not including specific data from this portion of my study in the dissertation. Here I outline my struggle with conducting this research, and subsequently my decision to exclude this material from the dissertation. However, despite my own decision to exclude covertly gained data, I argue that it should not

automatically be ‘taken off the table’ as a methodological option for researchers, when appropriate, as long as the ethical and personal aspects of this research are fully considered beforehand, and reflected on throughout the fieldwork, as well as once the researcher has left the field. As a method, it offers many benefits for researchers, especially those seeking to pursue an ‘everyday IPE’ research agenda. While the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews is in some ways less-detailed than that obtained through my first-hand observations of the call center workplace, they nevertheless provided considerable detail and insight into the processes and experiences of call center labour, and ultimately the data gathered in this phase supported (and corresponded) with the data gained with my initial undercover research. As such, the overall structure, focus, and results of this dissertation were not greatly impacted by my difficult decision to exclude the initial research. Although, it should be noted, that even with the exclusion of the covert data from my dissertation, the personal experience I gained by working in this setting as part of this initial phase of research served to influence and inform the types of questions, and areas of inquiry, that were included within my interviews.

3.1 In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews

In the second section of this chapter I discuss my use of covert participant observation research as part of this study. One of the primary motivations for doing so was to add to—as well as expand on—the limited existing methodological literature on this subject. In particular, in including this discussion and personal reflection on the use covert participant observation as part of my dissertation (and ultimately my decision to not use

this data), it was my aim to focus, in some depth, on the potential personal impacts that this type of involved research—which relies centrally on the use of continued, long-term deception—can have on the researcher. As noted, it is of critical importance for researchers to take this into account before considering pursuing this method, along with the important potential impacts on participants that have been relatively well covered within this literature, of course. Another major factor behind including this section in the dissertation (again, even though the data that was gathered as a result was entirely excluded) was to engage in a discussion and evaluate the method in relation to the growing body of studies within the field of IPE (including my own) that take an ‘everyday’ approach. However, while the inclusion of this section is key to—among other things—understanding the trajectory of my research, the data that serves as the heart of my dissertation was actually derived from a series of semi-structured interviews with former transnational call center employees. Although, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, the participant observation research that I undertook served as served to inform the series of semi-structured interviews that I later conducted with former call center employees. Indeed, the questions I asked participants were, in many ways, influenced and shaped by the experiences I gained while working undercover as a call center agent. More specifically, through my experience working (and researching) in the call center workplace I was able to witness first hand the intensity of the work within this industry, the high degree of surveillance that is present in the call center workplace, and the ubiquitous monitoring workers are subject to on a daily basis—all of which, to some degree, impact the forms of resistance available to workers. I also observed the different ways that male and female call center workers negotiated and made sense of their roles

within the call center workplace—with men, in many cases, gravitating toward (and identifying more closely with) the sales aspects of the job, rather than the more feminized customer service aspects, which I further explored with my interviews. Additionally, I observed and experienced how women workers within this setting are, in some cases, sexually harassed by the customers they speak to—and are tasked with helping—over the phone. Further, I observed the use of food and prizes as employee incentives. I also, importantly, I observed several forms of everyday worker resistance, which provided me confidence going forward that these types of action were present in the industry, and therefore worth investigating. All of these direct observations and experiences undoubtedly helped steer the types of questions that I asked interviewees in my second phase of research, and also, in turn, helped me better understand their responses. In this section I turn to discussing these interviews in more depth. Also, at the end of this section, I address my use of anonymous online blog and discussion forum data to supplement the data gathered through these interviews.

During the summer of 2014 I conducted a series of eleven in-depth semi-structured interviews with former transnational call center employees located within the province of Ontario (see appendix E).⁸⁹ As Halperin and Heath explain, ‘semi-structured interviews generally involve a small number of interviews in which the interviewer uses a combination of structured questions (to obtain factual information) and unstructured questions (to probe deeper into people’s experiences)’ (2012, p.258). In preparing my interview schedule (see Appendix D) I included both of these types of questions in order

⁸⁹ All names (both of individuals, as well as the companies where they were employed) included in the dissertation are pseudonyms used to protect the identities of participants.

to get a full picture of participants' experiences working within the call center setting. Halperin and Heath (2012, p. 262) note that, 'a semi-structured interview is a powerful research instrument which can help a researcher understand people's perceptions, feelings, opinions, experiences, understandings, values, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, behavior, formal and informal roles, and relationships,' and indeed, through the interviews I conducted with former employees, I was able to obtain information regarding participants' experiences, roles, and understandings as call center agents. While my study involved a 'small sample'⁹⁰ of former call center workers, the data gathered through the interviews was incredibly rich, detailed, and enlightening, and revealed a great deal about the creative ways that workers have found to fight back within highly restrictive and controlled workplaces. Also, as noted at the beginning of this section, while my sample size may have been small, those included, in several cases, worked at multiple call centers, which afforded them the ability to discuss (and compare) their experiences within these workplaces during the interviews. Therefore, overall, the study is not negatively impacted by the small sample size.

Further, in line with Hesse-Biber (2007, p.113), who notes, 'as a feminist interviewer, I am interested in getting at the subjugated knowledge of the diversity of women's realities that often lie hidden and unarticulated. I am asking questions and exploring issues that are of particular importance to women's lives,' I sought to explore the importance of gender within the industry during the interviews, and, in particular, how gender shapes and informs men's and women's resistance practices. In general, as Hesse-Biber notes,

⁹⁰ Crouch and McKenzie (2006, p. 483) note, small sample refers to a sample of less than 20 cases.

‘interviewing is a particularly valuable research method feminist researchers can use to gain insight into the world of their respondents’ (2007, p.114). In particular, as Campbell and Wasco note, ‘at an epistemological level, feminist social science legitimates women’s lived experiences as sources of knowledge. The ordinary and extraordinary events of women’s lives are worthy of critical reflection as they can inform our understanding of the social world’ (2000, p.775).⁹¹ And indeed, this is at the heart of the FEPGE approach outlined later in this dissertation, which strongly holds that workers’ gendered everyday experiences and actions (such as those that I documented through the semi-structured interviews in this study) can tell us a great deal about the global economy. Although here it should be noted that with any form of interview, participants’ responses reflect their subjective understandings of events and experiences in their lives. As Halperin and Heath explain, ‘all people come to an interview with biases and prejudices; and people are prone to something known as the ‘interview effect’: the tendency for interviewees to give more ‘socially acceptable’ answers or answers they think the interviewer wants’ (2012, p.259). However, the subjective accounts of participants’ everyday experiences that I gained through this series of semi-structured interviews—while not ‘unmediated’ (Atkinson 2006, p.161)⁹²—still provide valuable insight into the

⁹¹ Campbell and Wasco (2000, p.778) expand on this point, asserting that ‘what most centrally, and reliably, defines research as feminist research is its guiding philosophy on the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and the process by which research is created (methodology). Feminist research seeks to respect, understand, and empower women. Therefore, feminist epistemologies accept women’s stories of their lives as legitimate sources of knowledge, and feminist methodologies embody an ethic of caring through the process of sharing those stories.’

⁹² As Atkinson asserts, ‘I do not believe that interviews can give us access to unmediated private experience. Indeed it is far from clear what such private experience might amount to. Rather, I suggest that interviews with informants yield autobiographical narratives that can and should be understood as performed identities’ (2006, p.161). He continues,

participants' everyday experiences of work, how these experiences relate to the actions and resistance workers pursue, and further, how these everyday experiences are connected to the broader global economy.

Through the use of an FEPGE approach, the data gathered through the semi-structured interviews can be used to explore larger connections between the everyday and the global, as well as to ascertain the ways in which these connections and spaces are ultimately gendered (as I proceed to do in later chapters). Burawoy (2000) makes similar claims in relation to the use of ethnographic methods in researching globalization. Utilizing such methods means taking seriously the idea that everyday (or local) actors and spaces have a great deal of insight and information to offer scholars in attempting to better understand much larger processes and structures, and are therefore a natural extension of the FEPGE approach. Because transnational call center workers serve as the 'interface' between a company and its customers, as well as between 'the local and the global' (Huws 2009, p.6),⁹³ the data gathered through the semi-structured interviews provide me with a unique opportunity to examine more closely the connections between the everyday space of the transnational call center workplace, and the larger transnational industry within which it is situated, while still paying close attention to the gendered dynamics at play in these spaces and relationships. The information gathered from the interviews provided the

noting that 'these are not private or idiosyncratic to individual respondents. They are mediated and framed by culturally shared forms and genres' (Atkinson 2006, pp.161-162). Although, as Atkinson argues, '...we do not need to assume that narratives tell us *nothing* about past events and actions and that they have absolutely no referential value. Rather, we need to understand that events are always constructed through the idioms of narrative performance. In that sense, then, the past and our experience of the past are always narrative enactments' (2006, p.162, emphasis in original).

⁹³ Huws also mentions a third interface 'between the sphere of production and reproduction' (2009, p.7).

necessary material to highlight and underscore the value of the FEPGE approach (which I outlined in depth in chapter two) to studying the global economy. As I demonstrate later in the dissertation, by placing the focus on workers' everyday experiences in the call center setting—in line with the FEPGE approach—I was able to obtain a nuanced picture of how gendered assumptions around service work (which, as much of the literature surrounding the call center industry points out, are pervasive) serve to both shape the broader division of labour within transnational call centers, as well as inform the resistance practices of individual workers within this setting. I was able to see how these gendered assumptions play out, as well as how they are resisted, within the call center, by talking to the workers directly, and in general, I was able to get a better sense of the 'multidirectional' nature of the globalization (Freeman 2001).

Ontario was chosen as the case study for this project as it—along with the Atlantic Canadian provinces—is a key site of call center employment in Canada (Vincent and McKeown 2010, p.3; Van Jaarsveld et al. 2007, p.3). Ontario has experienced significant deindustrialization in recent years (Tiessen 2014, p.5; Constantelos 2014, p.828), and this has been accompanied by efforts within the province—including by the provincial government—to attract call centers (Guard et al. 2006, p.279; Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000, p.6; van Wageningen, 2013, May 3; Mills, 2013, May 24; Pilienci, 2008, June 3). I discuss this in more depth in chapter four.

With the exception of one participant who was living in Ontario at the time of the interview (but who had been employed at a call center in another province before relocating here), all those included had worked in at least one call center located in the

province of Ontario. The interviews were conducted in person when possible, and over the telephone when this was not feasible.⁹⁴ Each interview was about an hour and a half in length. There was a fairly even split between men and women included in the study, with six women taking part, and five men. While this was not deliberate, it was desirable, as it gave me the opportunity to further investigate the ways in which gender mattered (for both male and female employees) in the industry, specifically the ways in which gendered occupational identities are created within the call center setting. Participants were recruited through the use of posters advertising the study, which were posted at various public locations, and I also used a snowballing method to obtain contact information for potential participants from those already taking part. All the participants included worked ‘on the line,’ that is, they either initiated, or answered calls from customers or clients. However, one participant had been promoted during their time at the call center where they employed to a supervisory position. Also, the majority of participants dealt exclusively with American clients and customers over the telephone. This is unsurprising given the considerable list of advantages for U.S. companies in ‘near shoring’ their call centers to Canada (Batt et al. 2009, p.464). None of the participants reported being aware of any union presence, or successful collective organizing efforts, at the call center(s) where they were employed.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ See Halperin and Heath (2012, pp. 254-255; Hesse-Biber 2007, p.119) for a discussion of the pros and cons of conducting ‘individual face-to-face interviews’ and ‘telephone interviews.’

⁹⁵ Although one participant, Samuel (Interview, 2014), did mention that there could have been a union presence at the call center where he worked (based on the fact that one of his colleagues that had worked there for ten to twenty years had “a lot of vacation days” and “seemed like he was happy being there”). However, he did not mention being

Several of the participants included in the study had worked at more than one transnational call center, so within individual interviews, there was often an exploration (and comparison) of different forms of call center labour. While the bulk of the participants included only interacted with customers in English, more than one participant interacted with customers in French (these participants had been paid a ‘language premium’ because of this). Overall, the participants included a diverse range of call center labour. Both in-bound and out-bound workers were included, in addition to those who had worked ‘in-house’ call centers (Van Jaarsveld 2007, p.3) and those who were employed by ‘subcontractors’ (Van Jaarsveld et al. 2007, p.3). Further, participants represented a range of occupational roles within the call center industry, including customer service agents, survey administrators, technical support workers, and product and service sales. Although, within the call center industry there are generally gender divisions between these various roles—with women more likely to be occupied within service positions, and men within technical support and sales—which illustrates that worker experiences within the industry are far from uniform (Belt et al. 2002, p.31; Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000, p.45; Russell 2005, pp.198-199).

Originally I had sought to interview participants who had worked at a call center for at least three months, but due to the high degree of turnover, or ‘churn’ (Bain and Taylor 2000, p.11) within the industry, I later adjusted the guidelines of the study, lowering the minimum employment time within the call center to one month. One potential issue with the study was that some of the participants had not been employed at a call center for

contacted directly by a member of a union, and he seemed unsure during the interview if there was actually a union presence there.

more than a year at the time of the interview, so it is possible that their ability to recall details of everyday life within the workplace may have been more limited. However, given the depth of detail provided with most of the interviews, the effect of the temporal distance from the call center experience seems to have been fairly limited. The interviews covered a broad range of questions aimed at exploring the nature of everyday life within the call center workplace. Themes covered included the role of gender within the workplace (including experiences of face-to-face, as well as voice-to-voice sexual harassment), general customer aggression, the pervasiveness of surveillance and monitoring within the workplace (Barnes 2004), the use of workplace competition and incentives, as well as ‘grand tour questions’ aimed at getting a general idea of what a typical day at the call center looked like for participants (Leech 2002, p.667). I also included a series of questions that were aimed at ascertaining what ‘worker resistance’ meant to them, and what forms or strategies of resistance that they observed within the call center(s) where they had been employed.

The data I gathered through the semi-structured interviews with former call center workers was also supplemented with information collected from an online discussion forum where a worker was seeking out information and strategies for collectively organizing a Canadian transnational call center workplace, as well as an anonymous call center worker blog, which offered fellow call center workers the opportunity to fill out a short anonymous survey about their experiences in the industry (with responses posted to the site). I chose to look in more depth at a blog titled ‘The Secret Diary of a Call Centre,’ which was authored by someone identified as ‘Call Guy,’ because, as noted, it included anonymous (and voluntary) survey responses from many other call center workers, and

therefore provided a broader look at the everyday experiences of workers in this setting.

As Hookway explains, ‘despite the growing research on blogs⁹⁶ and blogging—most of which has been produced by information/computer science and media/rhetoric/communication studies—the research opportunities they afford for the social sciences, particularly qualitative research practices remain unexamined’ (2008, p.94; Murthy 2008, p.838). However, despite possible problems related to ‘impression management and general trustworthiness of blogs’ (as well as additional ethical considerations)⁹⁷, Hookway provides an argument for the inclusion of this type of data within social science research. In particular, he asserts,

in terms of benefits, blogs offer a low-cost, global and instantaneous tool of data collection. *They also provide a very useful technique for investigating the dynamics of everyday life from an unadulterated first-person perspective* and offer a research window into understanding the contemporary negotiation of the ‘project of the self’ in late/post modern times. With adequate research parameters in place, blogs can have an important and valuable place in the qualitative researcher’s toolkit (2008, p.107, emphasis added).

Therefore, it is clear to see—especially in regard to studies (such as mine) that serve to study the everyday in relation to the global economy—the information provided by anonymous worker blogs, as well as discussion forums, are particularly useful sources of

⁹⁶ As Hookway explains, ‘typically [...] blogs take the form of online diaries or what I call ‘self-narratives’, where private and intimate content is posted in daily, monthly, and yearly snippets (Herring et al., 2004)’ (2008, pp.93-94).

⁹⁷ Hookway notes that ‘an important aspect of this question is what the conventional notions of private and public mean in online research venues. This is pertinent to the collection and analysis of blogs. Do blog researchers need to gain authorial permission from bloggers when recording their posts? Is blog material academic fair game or is informed consent needed?’ (2008, p.105). Before including any data from ‘Call Guy’s’ blog, I consulted with Carleton University’s ethics coordinator, who assured me that as long as the blog was public, than I was free to include in my dissertation (personal communication, 15 July, 2014).

data, especially when used in conjunction with other qualitative research methods. And, as Hookway notes, with the collection of this form of information the researcher is able to avoid—to a certain extent—some of the primary issues faced with other forms of research, such as interviews and participant observation.

3.2 Covert Participant Observation⁹⁸

During my covert phase of research, I was employed at a transnational call center full-time for almost three months. I did not reveal my research interests to either my employer, or my coworkers. The center was located in Canada, but had its headquarters in the United States. There were approximately one hundred employees employed at the call center, most of whom were women (including the team supervisors). The call center handled in-bound customer service calls, however it also housed an outbound division that focused on contacting people in an attempt to generate business. I spent several weeks completing the paid training required for all customer service agents; after that I was assigned to a team and I went out on the floor to handle live calls from customers located primarily in the United States. I aided customers by helping them place orders, as well as answering general inquiries and transferring calls to appropriate departments. For more complex customer service issues I transferred customers to a separate customer service department agent. I was also required to offer additional products and services to

⁹⁸ I presented an earlier version of this section on covert participant observation as a stand-alone paper titled ‘Researching Gender and Resistance in the Transnational Workplace: Evaluating the Benefits and Drawbacks of Using Covert Participant Observation,’ at the 2014 International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Convention in Toronto, Canada, on 27 March, 2014. I wish to thank the panel discussant, Jack L. Amoureux (Wake Forest University), for his detailed and insightful feedback on my paper.

customers calling in, so there was some overlap between the customer service and sales or outbound tasks within the call center workplace. All of my calls were timed and recorded and randomly reviewed by my supervisor for training purposes. In addition my computer screen was recorded while handling calls, so that both the audio and visual recordings could be reviewed during regular ‘coaching sessions’ with my supervisor—which were used to improve employee performance, and address any issues that may have occurred during calls (e.g. taking too long to address a customer’s problem). I was also required to log into my phone at the beginning of the day, and had a series of codes to be used when leaving my phone (I even had a code for bathroom breaks), which meant that all my activities within the call center were accounted for from the time I arrived, to the time I left for the day. Despite the high degree of surveillance and control exerted over workers, I observed several forms of everyday resistance (Scott 1989) while in the field.

Participant observation offers researchers the opportunity to gain a better understanding of participants in their study by observing, as well as participating, in their everyday lives (McKenzie 2009, p. 2; Pawluch et al. 2005, p.3). This approach, as Li explains, is extremely valuable because ‘as the only field method that allows researchers to observe what people do in “real life” contexts, not what they say they do, ethnographic participant observation can supply detailed, authentic information unattainable by any other method’ (2008, p.101). In general, participant observation is conducted either covertly, or overtly (although in some cases, a combination of both approaches is used). Covert participant observation is defined as participant observation research that is ‘conducted without the participant’s knowledge or without full awareness of the researcher’s intentions,’ in

contrast to overt participant observation research, where the researcher's role, and the aims of their research, is known to participants (O'Reilly 2009, p.9; Strangleman and Warren 2008, p.53; Gray 2009, p.397; Schutt 2009, p.321; Jorgensen 1989, p.21; Spicker 2011, p.118; Erikson 1967, p.366).⁹⁹ While the division between covert and overt research is often presented in the literature as a simplistic matter, in reality, many scholars have highlighted that it is actually much more complicated—with research usually falling somewhere on a 'continuum between overtness and covertness' (Murphy and Dingwall 2007, p.342; O'Reilly 2009, p.49; Calvey 2008, pp.908-909; McKenzie 2009, p.1; Lugosi 2006, p.544).¹⁰⁰ And, in some cases, researchers change their approach over time—moving from a covert role to an overt role, or vice versa (O'Reilly 2009, p.9; Lauder 2003, pp.190-192; Jorgensen 1989, p.57).

The use of covert participant observation research has a rich history within the social sciences (Homan 1980, p.50).¹⁰¹ Strangleman and Warren note that 'there are many examples of covert participant observation in industrial sociology where both

⁹⁹ As Schutt notes, 'the term *participant observer* actually refers to several specific roles that a qualitative researcher can adopt' (2009, p.321, emphasis in original). These include: covert observer, complete observer, covert participant, and participant observer (Schutt 2009, p.323; Gray 2009, p.398; Jorgensen 1989, p.55; McKenzie 2009, p.2). According to this typology, my research within the call center, would fall under the category of 'covert participant.'

¹⁰⁰ Although, McKenzie notes that 'covert practices are an integral component of all projects, even in overt studies' (2009, p.4).

¹⁰¹ For example, 'Paul Cressey (1932) remained covert in the taxi-dance halls. And Nels Anderson (1923) never told his subjects that he was studying them. He didn't really see it that way since he was himself living as a Hobo (homeless person), struggling to get by day to day' (O'Reilly 2009, p.45). Further, 'one of the most infamous covert studies is David Rosenhan's (1973), in which eight researchers from different backgrounds gained access to an institution of the insane simply by claiming that they heard voices. Once hospitalised, they then acted 'normally' in the settings (as far as they could, given the nervousness they experienced), no longer alluding to the voices or displaying any other unusual behaviours, in order to test the effects of labeling and the subjective nature of diagnosis' (O'Reilly 2009, p.45).

organisations and the workforce were unaware of the research process' (2008, p.61).¹⁰²

Notable examples of covert participant observation studies include Laud Humphreys' controversial research on 'tea rooms in American homosexual slang' (O'Reilly 2009, p.45; Calvey 2008, p.906; Goode 1996, p.12). With his study, Humphreys 'served as a "watch queen" so that he could learn about the men engaging in homosexual acts in a public restroom' (Schutt 2009, p.326; O'Reilly 2009, p.45). His research has been a commonly cited example against the use of covert methodology because 'Humphreys abused his position as covert researcher when later he noted down the car registration numbers of the participants and then pursued them to their homes to conduct a survey' (O'Reilly 2009, p.45; Homan 1980, p.50). Further, as Schutt notes: 'Randall Alfred (1976) joined a group of Satanists to investigate the group members and their interaction. Erving Goffman (1961) worked as a state hospital assistant while studying the treatment of psychiatric patients' (2009, p.326).

In more recent years, this method has been described as 'the truly least used of all the qualitative research methods' (Miller 1995, p.97). This, as Miller explains, has largely been a result of 'complicated ethical issues [which are] inherent to secret investigation [and which] have created a methodological training bias' (1995, p.97; Li 2008, p.101). However, despite this, there seems to have been a resurgence—albeit limited—in the use of covert methods in the last decade. Recent examples include, Brotsky and Giles' (2007) use of covert participant observation to infiltrate, interact, and study the 'pro-ana'

¹⁰² For example, they note that 'Glucksmann's *Women on the Line*, published under the pseudonym of Ruth Cavendish, was based on a seven-month period of covert participant observation in 1977-78 during which time she was employed full-time in a motor components factory' (Strangleman and Warren 2008, p.53). Also, Laurie Graham's (1995) book '*On the Line at Subaru-Isuzu*, is an account of her doctoral research into Japanese car assembly in the USA' (Strangleman and Warren 2008, p.62).

community online, as well as Lauder's (2003) covert study of 'the Heritage Front,' a 'neo-National Socialist Organization' based in Canada.¹⁰³ And as O'Reilly notes, 'Nancy Scheper-Hughes (2004) has recently undertaken covert research on organs trafficking and discovered that an abundant sources of organs is provided by the living bodies of the poor, naïve, illiterate, frail, mentally ill, and children' (2009, p.47).

Participant observation research—whether done overtly or covertly—offers researchers the ability to observe worker actions, such as acts of resistance, that are by their nature meant to be concealed (Analoui 1995, p.58). As Tope et al. note, 'observation-based studies are more effective in obtaining information about often subtle workplace behaviors and attitudes...behaviors such as work avoidance are likely to remain invisible to interviewers' (2005, p.481-2, see also Vinten 1994, pp.3-35). Strangleman and Warren similarly assert that 'ethnography is one of the most important forms of qualitative research of [...] workplaces because it allows access to hidden parts of work' (2008, p.53). In my case, I had a central interest in examining the ways in which worker resistance was manifest within the transnational call center workplace in an effort to both understand in what ways these forms of resistance are gendered, as well as the ways in which these 'everyday' actions have the potential to impact the global economy.

However, as noted, I was unable to openly access this workplace—despite several

¹⁰³ Interestingly, Lauder started out conducting his research overtly, that is, he openly approached members and leaders of the organization with the intent to conduct research about them. However, after receiving little information from the participants, he decided that the use of deception was needed in order to obtain the necessary data. Following from this, he pretended to be an 'ideological convert' in order to infiltrate the organization (2003, pp.190-191). It was only after doing so that he was able to gain access to the 'everyday experiences of the subjects' (p.192).

attempts at contacting call centers in the region in writing to request access to observe the workplace—so covert participant observation was the only method that would allow me to gain direct access, in order to observe the worker’s daily actions and interactions. Again, while I had contacted several call centers, all but one—who explicitly refused access—opted to not respond to my letters. As Tope et. al (2005, p.473) note, conducting participant observation research as part of a workplace ethnography can offer greater information and insight than simply relying on other methods, as ‘participant observers often provide detailed examples of various forms of worker resistance while an interviewer might note that such resistance was widespread without providing examples or details’ (Tope et al. 2005, p.473).

One of the key benefits of pursuing covert participant observation is the fact that by concealing their role as researcher, the researcher is then better able to ensure that participants will not act differently as a result of being observed, which allows them to address the ‘Hawthorne effect’ (or ‘reactive effect’), at least to a stronger degree than would be the case with overt research (Strangleman and Warren 2008, p.61; Schutt 2009, p.324; Gray 2009, p.397; Spicker 2011, p.120). This is an issue because, as Gray explains, when participants alter their behavior and actions as a result of knowing they are being researched, it can have an impact on the validity of the research results (2009, pp.397-398). However, this does not mean, as some have suggested, that using covert methods will entirely ensure that the researcher’s presence will not, in some way, potentially affect participants (Spicker 2011, p.120; Calvey 2008, p.913).

The strategy of gaining employment within a corporation or industry you are interested in studying (either in an open or covert way) is well documented within the literature on

workplace studies, and it is unquestionably the best option for gaining hands-on knowledge of the day-to-day management processes and worker practices (Friedman and McDaniel 1998, p.115; 122; Vinten 1994, pp.33-35).¹⁰⁴ As Brannan et al. assert, ‘ethnographic sensibilities and sensitivities are especially relevant to current forms of post-bureaucratic and service-based organization. The changing nature of employment, and the demands placed upon employees, can only be fully understood through the use of ethnographic techniques’ (2007, p.396). However, gaining access openly to many workplace sites (for example, transnationally situated factories or service workplaces, such as the call center) can be difficult, if not impossible to obtain, for various reasons. And even if it is possible to gain access to a workplace openly, it may not be entirely desirable, as workers may resent management’s decision to allow you to observe them, or they may even view the researcher as a spy for the company (Jorgensen 1989, p.45).

In the ethics review process, my university’s REB required me to attempt to gain access to the transnational call center workplace openly (i.e. with the permission of the employers). I sent out several letters outlining the nature of my research, requesting permission to observe workers within their call center (and here I explicitly stated my interest in, and focus on, acts of worker resistance, as was required by the REB). All but one of the call centers that I contacted did not even supply a response to my request. The one response that I did receive was supplied by one of the most notorious call centers, which very clearly stated that they had no interest in having me come to their workplace to conduct the research I had outlined.

¹⁰⁴ Houlihan’s (2006) study provides an example of a researcher taking on a ‘full participation role’ within a call center (Burgess and Connell 2006, p.13).

Ethnographic work—in particular, participant observation, with its inherent focus on everyday actors and interactions—offers an important avenue for exploring the connections between the everyday and the international. As Burawoy states, ‘in entering the lives of those they study, ethnographers attune themselves to the horizons and rhythms of their subject’s existence. The ethnographer has, therefore, a privileged insight into the lived experience of globalization’ (2000, p.4). However, while there are many pros to pursuing covert participant observation research, its use has also proven ‘ethically controversial’ for several reasons (Jorgensen 1989, p.46). The primary ethical concerns raised in discussions of covert participant observation are the lack of informed consent on the part of participants, the use of deception, and finally, the potential invasion of privacy involved (Oliver and Eales 2008, p.345; Li 2008, p.101; McKenzie 2009, p.3). In fact, because of the ethical issues that are associated with this form of research, students are often actively dissuaded from utilizing it (Spicker 2011, p.118; Calvey 2008, p.906).¹⁰⁵ However, as Jorgensen notes, ‘these objections notwithstanding, most participant observers agree that covert strategies at least necessary under some circumstances, such as in studies of deviant or criminal subcultures,’ or in cases where access to the research setting in question is can not be gained openly (1989, pp.48-49).

The lack of informed consent on the part of participants is one of the most prominent, and commonly cited ethical issues involved in the use of this method (Jorgensen 1989, p.47; Spicker 2011, p.123; Dingwall 1980, p.877). Here the central issue is a concern with

¹⁰⁵ In general, as Spicker notes: ‘This reflects an atmosphere in which research is becoming increasingly regulated and hemmed in by ethical constraints (Haggerty, 2004). In an environment where institutions are actively scrutinizing the ethical implications of research proposals, and where there tends to be a presumption that covert research is problematic, it is becoming increasingly difficult to plan and execute research if covert elements have been identified (Iphofen, 2006; Tysome, 2006)’ (2011, p.118).

participant's 'autonomy or self-determination,' which is 'the ability of people to decide for themselves what happens to them' (Spicker 2011, p.125). Although as McKenzie highlights, even when studies are undertaken overtly, 'researchers rarely tell all participants everything about their research' (2009, p.5). The principle of consent originated with bio-medical research and is now applied to most research, including social science research, where human subjects are involved (Spicker 2011, p.125).¹⁰⁶ However, 'consent from subjects does not absolve anthropologists from their obligations to protect research participants as far as possible against the potentially harmful effects of research' (Association of Social Anthropologists 1999, cited in Spicker 2011, p.126). Covert researchers importantly 'owe those participants the same obligation to respect their confidence as they would have if their researcher status had been disclosed' (Australian NHMRC 2011, cited in Spicker 2011, p.126).

The issue of deception has also been raised as a central concern, as participants are not made aware of the research (Jorgensen 1989, p.47; Spicker 2011, p.119; Goode 1996, p.11). As Goode highlights, scholars such as Erikson, who are strongly critical of the use of covert methods argue that, 'as a general rule, research based on access to a particular scene through the use of deception, as well as misrepresentation of that research to the subjects of the study, should be regarded as unethical' (Erickson 1967, cited in Goode 1996, pp.18-19). However, Goode notes that 'while deception should not be the sociologist's primary mode of research—in most settings, it is not even necessary—' Douglas argues that it should not be ruled out as a strategy because for many scenes, it may be the only way to get the facts of the case' (Douglas 1976 cited in Goode 1996,

¹⁰⁶ However, Calvey asserts that the use of 'medical models' to guide social science research is a problem because they are inappropriate (2008, p.908).

p.14). In my case, the only way to gain access to the call center workplace for the purposes of doing observational research was to conceal my identity as a researcher. Spicker, however, problematizes the fact that covert research is often conflated with deceptive research, arguing that they are not one in the same (2011, p.118). Following from this, he asserts ‘many of the objections which are made to covert research are objections to deception, rather than covert activity’ (2011, p.119). It less clear under Spicker’s conception of covert research whether my actions would (or should) be labeled as ‘deceptive,’ rather than simply covert (2011, p.119).¹⁰⁷

In addition, issues around the privacy of participants have also been raised. As Spicker explains, ‘privacy refers in the first instance to non-interference; respecting privacy means that people are not inappropriately observed, inconvenienced or reported on’ (2011, p.123). Although, as he further explains, the current concept of privacy used ‘goes well beyond non-interference; it asserts that people have elements of their lives which is [sic] for them to control, and no-one else’ (Spicker 2011, p.123). However, as Spicker highlights, ‘the concept of privacy hinges on a basic distinction between the private and public spheres,’ even though the distinction between these spaces is not always straightforward (2011, p.124). In general, ‘covert observation is usually regarded as acceptable if undertaken in a public place...it is implicit in sanctioning unconsented observation of individuals in a public place that they are aware that any of their actions

¹⁰⁷ As Spicker outlines, ‘it is covert research [rather than deception], is research which is not disclosed to the subject—where the researcher does not reveal that research is taking place’ and ‘it is covert research if a researcher sees and records something when people have not realized that research is going on’ (2011, p.119). My research involved both of these elements, however, because I represented myself as a regular call center job applicant in order to gain employment for the purposes of research, the line between covert research and deception is less clear.

will be visible to anyone simultaneously present’ (The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council 1999, cited in Spicker 2011, p.135). In the case of many workplaces as potential research settings, it is not clear where they would be situated within the public or private sphere. Although, it is also not necessarily clear that, even if a workplace is seen to be situated within the private sphere, that it should be ‘off limits’ for researchers seeking to conduct covert observational research (when appropriate, and when the potential harms involved have been fully considered). In fact, as already noted, there is a long history within industrial sociology of studying workplaces using covert participant observation (Strangleman and Warren 2008, p.61).

The Tri-Council Policy Statement¹⁰⁸—which is used as a guide for Research Ethics Boards (REBs) within Canadian universities for reviewing ethics protocol applications—outlines key ‘guiding ethical principles’ which include ‘respect for free and informed consent’ as well as ‘respect for privacy and confidentiality’ (Tri-Council Policy Statement, Context of an Ethics Framework, p. i.5)—both of which have been important issues within the debate on the use of covert methods. However, in chapter ten of the Tri-Council Policy Statement, which states the ethical guidelines for conducting qualitative research, covert participant observation is explicitly outlined (and accepted) as a potential form of observational research. The Tri-Council Policy Statement reads: ‘Participant observation may or may not require permission to observe and participate in activities of

¹⁰⁸ As noted in the introduction of the document, ‘the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS or the Policy) is a joint policy of Canada’s three federal research agencies—the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), or “the Agencies” (p.5).

the setting studied. In some situations, researchers will identify themselves and seek consent from individuals in the setting; in others, researchers will engage in covert non-participant or participant observation and not seek consent' (p.141). Thus, in certain cases, 'the REB may approve research without requiring that the researcher obtain consent from individuals being observed on the basis of justification provided by the researcher and appropriate privacy protection' (Tri-Council Policy Statement, p.141). Further, the Tri-Council Statement also suggests that in certain cases debriefing participants may not be 'possible or necessary,' and in my case my university's REB deemed that it would not be possible to reveal my research to those involved in the study after the covert participant observation had been completed, so no debriefing took place (p.143). Although, the confidentiality of those involved was still very much respected, which is important when undertaking covert (or overt) research (Gray 2009, p.398).

While the ethical concerns outlined in this section are all extremely valid and important—and need to be considered fully by researchers and REBs— they should not serve to automatically close off the possibility of undertaking covert participant observation. Rather, as Miller explains, 'deceptive observation carries ethical baggage less common to other qualitative methods, yet its ethicality is negotiable through detailed purpose and design' (1995, p.103). He suggests evaluating proposed research involving deception on a 'case by case basis' by conducting a 'cost-benefit analysis' to determine if the risks and potential harms involved in conducting such research are outweighed by the 'potential contributions of the findings to general human welfare' (Miller 1995, pp.102-103; see also Lauder 2003, p.186). Li similarly asserts, 'if done skillfully, the potential social benefits of covert work often outweigh its ethical risks, as the data collected can

help push the boundaries of our current understanding of disadvantaged individuals and groups in society. Such understanding can serve as advocacy to inform better policy and practice, ultimately bringing positive changes for people being studied' (2008, p.111).

A considerable amount of information has been written about the ethical issues that this form of research presents, however, much less has been written on the emotional or psychological effects of conducting this form of research, especially from the perspective of the researcher (Oliver and Eales 2008). This is an important—yet underexplored aspect—of covert participant observation, which deserves more focused attention by scholars, because covert researchers can 'experience enormous psychological strain' (Schutt 2009, p.326; Lugosi 2006, p.543).¹⁰⁹ As Schutt explains, 'because field researchers become a part of the social situation they are studying, they cannot help but be affected on a personal, emotional level' (Schutt 2009, p.335). Therefore, researchers need to take these potential emotional and psychological issues into account before undertaking covert research (Oliver and Eales 2008, p.345). One of the central emotional or psychological strains that a covert researcher is likely to experience is the fear that their role as researcher could be exposed. While Hilbert (1980, p.58) notes that the potential for exposure is usually over exaggerated,¹¹⁰ I did nevertheless have concerns about being 'found out' as a researcher, either by one of my former coworkers, or by the company itself. While working at the call center I maintained my identity as a university student (while concealing my research interests) because, it was not unusual for

¹⁰⁹ While not a concern with the research I had undertaken in the call center, Spicker notes that researchers may also face physical violence while conducting covert research (although, again, this would largely depend on the context in which the research was taking place) (2011, p.130).

¹¹⁰ However, it is important to note that research is now readily available on the Internet, in contrast to when Hilbert was writing about covert participant observation in the 1980s.

university students to seek employment within a call center, and therefore doing so would not provoke suspicion. As Bonds notes, many call center workers possess 'at least a college education' (2006, p.43; see also McFarland 2002, p.67; Huws 2009, p.3). However, despite this, I still had several moments while in the field where I became concerned about my research identity being revealed.

The primary source of concern for me, in deciding whether or not to use the data I had collected from this phase of research, was the unease I felt over using the detailed observations of the people with whom I had worked closely. These were people who became close personal friends and allies within the workplace and who were, of course, unaware that any research had taken place). Here Dingwall's phrase 'everyday betrayal' is particularly apt (1980, p.875). Oliver and Eales reported feeling a similar sense of 'unease' once they began to reflect on their covert research experiences (2008, p.352). In particular, one of the authors noted that they felt like they had 'used' their coworkers in conducting their research (Oliver and Eales 2008, p.352). Calvey also reported feeling guilt while conducting his covert research as a 'bouncer,' as a result of the 'sustained deception' that was involved (2008, p.911). Additionally, Li reported experiencing feelings of unease as a result of her covert research on female gambling, noting that this research resulted in her experiencing 'psychological conflicts' (2008, pp-108-110). Homan also noted the potential for covert observation to adversely affect researcher's personal lives (1980, p.55).

When conducting covert participant observation researchers can potentially feel as though they are 'exploiting relationships' in the field for research purposes (Homan 1980, p.54). In particular, Dingwall references the potential problems with the 'exploitation of

friendship' in order to obtain data while in the field (1980, pp.881-882). While Duncombe and Jessop (2002) discuss 'faking friendship' in the context of conducting interviews, not participant observation research, their discussion of this problem is nevertheless informative and useful. They note that in some cases, researchers are 'influenced by commercial pressures to 'do rapport' by 'faking friendship' in order to encourage the interviewee to open up. In practice, of course, all interviewing relationships, including women's interviews with women, are situated somewhere along a spectrum between the extremes of more genuine empathy and relationships with an element of 'faking'' (Duncombe and Jessop 2002, p.120).¹¹¹ Further, they highlight that the line between 'real' and 'fake' friendship can become increasingly unclear when repeated interviews are conducted (Duncombe and Jessop 2002, p.119). Overall, they assert that such practices can be ethically problematic, because participants can, as a result of researchers 'faking friendship,' reveal information that they may not have otherwise (Duncombe and Jessop 2002, p.120).

While I developed friendships with my coworkers, I am not sure that these relationships can adequately be captured with the terms 'doing rapport' or 'faking friendship,' even though I gained information about our workplace, as well as the call center industry in general (including information about forms of worker resistance), through daily discussions and interactions with them. However, it would be an overstatement to say that I cultivated these relationships for the sole purpose of gathering data. I considered many of the people who I worked with at the call center call center to be real friends,

¹¹¹ Duncombe and Jessop interestingly note that 'there are strong parallels between 'doing rapport' and the kinds of 'emotion work' that women, in particular, perform in their relationships by simulating empathy to make others feel good' (Hochschild, 1983)' (2002, p.107).

especially the women with whom I worked on a ‘team.’¹¹² The more senior members of the team, in particular, provided me (as well as other newer employees on my team) necessary emotional and technical support when dealing with difficult callers, even in cases when doing so interfered with completing their own work. And several of the people I trained with were a constant source of comedic relief and emotional support within the workplace, which I reciprocated. So while I undoubtedly benefited from these friendships, I would strongly hesitate to label them ‘fake,’ and this is consistent with Duncombe and Jessop’s assertion that the lines between real and fake friendship (or ‘doing rapport’) can become ‘blurred’ with repeated interactions with participants (2002, p.119).¹¹³

Overall, my decision to exclude this data can be seen to stem from ‘an ethic of responsibility’ (Gilligan 1982, p.57)¹¹⁴ I had toward those I worked with, and with whom I built close relationships with as a result of our shared workplace experiences. As Carol Gilligan explains, ‘an ethic of responsibility [...] stems from an awareness of

¹¹² Once we had completed training, we were assigned to smaller work teams, who worked under a specific supervisor.

¹¹³ This issue is complicated even further in my case because friendships within the call center workplace were of vital importance, not just for helping each other get through the day, but also because they were often key in performing and concealing forms of worker resistance. Similar to the ‘venerable popular culture of resistance’ noted by Scott (1989, p.35), the employees within the call center relied on others in order to keep more individualized forms of resistance hidden from supervisors or management.

¹¹⁴ As Preissle explains, ‘Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings challenged the privileging of principle-based decision making, and they reconceptualized moral theory to include the ethics of relation’ (2006, p.527). In particular, she notes, ‘In her 1982 text, Gilligan argued against privileging the abstract over the concrete, the principle over the relationship, the absolute over the relative, the universal over the particular, the objective over the subjective, and the cognitive over the affective’ (2006, p.518). Indeed, as I explain, I take up these challenges with my decision to not use the data collected through my covert participant research—in particular the challenge to not value ‘the principle over the relationship’—on the basis of ‘an ethic of responsibility’ (Gilligan 1982, p.57).

interconnection' (1982, p.57), and this awareness undoubtedly guided my decision, on moral grounds, to not use the detailed observations that I had gathered in secret. Although the methodological literature that I read in advance of undertaking this research prepared me for the practical considerations of undertaking this form of research, I was very much unprepared for how the actual experience would impact me, or my subsequent decisions regarding the use of the resultant data. The disjuncture between stated research guidelines and the actual experience of doing social science research has been noted by scholars such as Cotterill, who explains,

feminist writers have commented that newcomers to sociological research are often unprepared for the problems and contradictions they encounter (Scott, 1985; Stanley, 1984). In Stanley's view the two main models of the research process, the 'positivist' model and the 'naturalist' model are unrealistic—" 'hygienic research' in which no problems occur, no emotions are involved" (Stanley, 1984, p. 197)—and that new researchers are eventually faced with discrepancies between the models and their own experiences (1992, p.593).

And indeed, such broad guidelines on conducting social science research did not prepare me for the ways that the relationships I developed in the field would impact my view of my research, and the duties and responsibilities I would later feel I owed my co-workers—as participants (although, they were of course not aware of this status), and as friends. The disconnect and tension between 'hygienic' social science guidelines, and my experience as a feminist researcher who made decisions about my research based on relationships developed in the field, can be seen as evidence of the patriarchal culture I am situated within, as a researcher and a person. As Gilligan explains, 'the longstanding and vaunted divisions between mind and body, *reason and emotion, self and relationship*, when viewed through the lens of gender, turned out to be deeply gendered, reflecting the binaries and hierarchies of a patriarchal culture' (2011, p.104, emphasis added).

Ultimately, I made the decision to not devalue these relationships in order to simply further my research agenda.

All of the issues covered in this section can also be compounded by the fact that—due to the research being conducted undercover—there are few people with whom it is possible to discuss these concerns when conducting this type of research. In light of this, Gray suggests that researchers—particularly those doing covert research—should ‘consider using either [their] supervisor or another confidante as an advisor or ‘critical friend’ that you can discuss any issues that you are confronted with while in the field (and I would add, once you have actually completed the research, as well) (2009, p.401). Further, all ethnographic research is demanding, as researchers are required to immerse themselves in the environments that they are studying (Burawoy 2000, p.27; Gray 2009, p.400). While employed at the call center, I fully immersed myself into the call center culture in order to gain ‘membership’ within this community in order to access day-to-day worker behavior and interactions (Hilbert 1980, p.53; Tope et. al 2005, p.472). As Vinten explains, when researchers study workplaces using participant observation, and take on the role of ‘researcher as employee,’ it ‘is a role of total immersion, and to all intents and purposes the researcher is one with the employees alongside whom he or she will work’ (1994, pp.30-31). However, conducting covert participant observation research can present issues above and beyond the regular challenges involved in doing overt participant observation research. Along with doing the job I was hired to do (and was undertaking in order to observe the workplace, and, in particular, everyday worker resistance practices being undertaken by my colleagues), I also had to maintain the fictional account of my motivations for working at the call center.

Finally, when proposing research that falls outside the box of regularly employed social science methods (e.g. interviewing, surveys, focus groups) the ethics review process can take a considerable amount of time. This is because it is crucial for all the ethical issues that are presented by a proposed research project to be considered by members of the institution's Research Ethics Board (REB) in full. It is entirely understandable (and in fact, in many ways desirable) that projects involving certain methods—such as covert participant observation—may entail a longer review process because of the unique issues and challenges that they present. However, for many, especially graduate students, this can serve as a major deterrent to pursuing this form of research, which is unfortunate. In my case the ethics review process took over six months, from the time I submitted my original ethics application, to time that I received final approval for my project. Part of this can be attributed to the fact that I attempted to gain access to call center workplace openly, at the request of the REB, by sending out a series of letters to call centers, outlining my research, and requesting permission to observe the workplace for research purposes. I waited for over a month after sending these letters out to call centers before concluding that I was not going to receive any response at all from most of these companies, and therefore would need to reconsider pursuing this research covertly.

Also, for obvious reasons, the issue of deception was key among the concerns expressed by members of my university's REB, and the ethics review process for my project involved lengthy discussions on this issue. This may have been (at least partially) a result of the fact that, as Pascual-Leone et al. (2010) assert, existing ethical guidelines, such as the Tri-Council Policy Statement, 'do not adequately operationalize deception or differentiate among forms of deception in a way that is as accessible as it could be for

concrete implementation and discussion' (2010, p.241). In light of this, this group of scholars recently outlined the 'Windsor Deception Checklist (WDC),' a list of ten questions regarding the use of deception requiring yes or no answers, which they strongly suggest should accompany ethics protocol applications made to research ethics boards, in order to aid in determining whether or not the use of deception can be justified.

Checklists, such as the one proposed by Pascual et al. (2010), would serve as invaluable tools for researchers and review boards in considering projects involving the use of covert participant observation. The WDC may serve to greatly cut down on the time required for the review process, and therefore make covert participant observation a less intimidating option for conducting research.¹¹⁵ Although some scholars, such as Calvey argue that the 'bureaucratic' nature of most ethics review processes 'can deter, fetter and discourage creative covert research' (2008, p.908).¹¹⁶ In my case the use of covert research was not altogether discouraged by my university's REB, but it was closely—and I believe, rightfully—scrutinized before I was given clearance. Still, Calvey's call for a 'situated ethics' is interesting. As he explains, 'ethical codes, and various ethnographic accounts, offer a sanitized picture of social research. They offer little or at best limited nuanced understanding of the emotional, biographical and shifting character of fieldwork where ethical decisions are occasioned practices. I am not seeking to abolish professional

¹¹⁵ Also, once your project has received ethics clearance (if this is the case), it is still important to consider the time it may take to be able to gain access the research setting. I submitted several applications, and took part in multiple interviews, before finally being offered a job in call center. In total, this process took over a month to complete. As Gray notes, 'one of the greatest problems with the observational method is that of actually getting into the research setting,' so researchers should budget a reasonable amount of time to be able to achieve this (2009, pp.409-411).

¹¹⁶ In general, 'Ferrell and Hamm (1998, p. xiv) describe the current climate as the "dark ages" in the history of ethnographic research' (Pawluch et al. 2005, p.4).

codes nor add extensive regulations to them. Clearly, they are case contingent' (Calvey 2008, p.912). While it is unclear how Calvey's 'situated ethics' would play out—either in the ethics review process, or in the field itself—his call for a more flexible, context-sensitive consideration of the ethical issues involved in conducting covert research is worth considering.

While the ethical issues that are involved in conducting covert participant observation—namely the use of deception, potential invasion of privacy, and lack of informed consent—are extremely serious, and need to be considered fully before undertaking covert research, it is also important to take into account the potential personal issues and moral conflicts that researchers may experience as a result of this research as well. Thus, I fully support Oliver and Eales' assertion that researchers should 'consider not only the ethical questions of the rights and consequences of research participants, but, also consider that the consequences of conducting research in this way must also be evaluated in terms of the consequences on the researchers themselves' (2008, p.355). It is absolutely essential that all of these factors be taken into account by researchers—as well as university research ethics boards (REBs)—before pursuing this method of research. However, that said, researchers should not be actively dissuaded from pursuing this method, just because of the additional ethical and personal issues that are involved, as has often been the case. Despite the fact that covert participant observation has been, as Calvey states, 'stigmatized in the research world' (2008, p.907), for reasons discussed in this section, it should still be presented as an open option for researchers. Utilizing this approach—in cases where it is appropriate, and where the harms of conducting the research do not outweigh the potential benefits—offers social science researchers an

unparalleled opportunity to immerse themselves in the everyday lives of the participants in their study. Because of this, its value as a research method in relation to ‘Everyday IPE’ is clear. It provides an important methodological avenue for gaining a more nuanced understanding of the myriad connections between the everyday, gender, and the global economy. Participant observation—whether conducted overtly or covertly—is certainly not the only method that can be used in ‘Everyday IPE’ studies, however, it does represent a particularly valuable option, along with in-depth interviews (as outlined in the first section of this chapter). However, as discussed, not only must the potential harms toward participants be considered by researchers (and REBs) in full when proposing covert research, researchers should also be strongly encouraged to think about the personal issues they might be faced with in using this method—including potential personal conflicts that might arise based on the relationships and connections that develop with participants in the field. This point is in line with Preissle’s assertion that ‘a review of a research plan for protection of human participants provides only input from other researchers on obvious problematic issues; it does not guarantee that the researcher will have no further ethical challenges’ (2006, p.516).

‘Behind the imagery of India as the back office and call center hub for the world’s businesses and, increasingly, governments, is a complex and more “nearshore” reality of call centers. For years, Canada grew in prominence as a world leader in the offshore and outsourced call center business, along with other wealthy economies that make up the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), like Ireland and the UK’

-Andrew J.R. Stevens, 2014, p.4.

Chapter Four: Situating Transnational Call Centers in Canada

In this chapter I provide background information on the transnational call center industry, looking in particular at the development of the call center industry within Canada. This chapter also serves to demonstrate how and why—in line with the overall focus of the dissertation—the transnational call center provides an important case study for examining the intersections between gender, resistance, and the everyday in the global economy. As Burgess and Connell highlight, ‘over the past ten years there has been a massive growth in call centers worldwide’ (2006, p.2). The Canadian call center industry originally emerged in the early 1990s. As Buchanan explains, ‘two interrelated processes—globalization and restructuring—provide[d] the backdrop to the emergence of call-center work in Canada’ (2002, p.48). As a result of larger federal neoliberal restructuring efforts (Rankin and Wilcox 2004), several cities and provinces—especially those with ‘declining industries’ and high rates of unemployment—began to see call centers as a potential economic development strategy (Vincent and McKeown 2010, pp.1-4; McFarland 2009b; Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000, p.5; Buchanan 2002). However, neither the broader federal restructuring efforts, nor the emerging call center industry were ‘gender-neutral’ (Rankin and Wilcox 2004, p.53; McFarland 2009b, p.45; Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000, p.3).

As a report published by FIP Associates notes, ‘Contact Centre Canada [...] estimates that there are in excess of 14,000 contact centres in Canada, offering direct employment to over a half a million full and part time staff (or 3.4% of the total employed Canadian population), and contributing between Cdn.\$36 - \$38 million to our nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP)’ (n.d., p.1; Stevens 2014, p.59). Although, Statistics Canada report outlines that call centers are not evenly distributed throughout the country, rather they are ‘found in certain provinces, [and] located in smaller urban areas with higher unemployment and a relatively educated labour force’ (Vincent and McKeown 2010, p.1).¹¹⁷ The call center industry is over-represented within the province of Ontario, as well as the Eastern provinces (Vincent and McKeown 2010, p.3; Van Jaarsveld et al. 2007, p.3). Overall, Vincent and McKeown note that ‘the industry’s revenues climbed steadily from just over \$424 million in 1998 to almost \$2.76 billion in 2006, representing an average annual increase of 27.7%. Over two-thirds of this revenue growth was generated by call centers located in Ontario’ (2010, p.3). Overall, as Stevens notes, ‘most of Canada’s centers service the finance, telecommunications, retail hospitality, and public service sectors (Van Jaarsveld, Frost, and Walker 2007, 10). Growth in these areas has been substantial. Between 2000 and 2004, 166 call centers were established in Canada, creating about 50,000 jobs (EDC 2005)’ (2014, p.59).

One of the earliest, and most prominent, provincial efforts to attract call center jobs was undertaken by New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna in the 1990s (McFarland 2009a,

¹¹⁷ For a brief overview of call centers, across all the Canadian provinces, see FIP (n.d., pp.1-7).

p.2; McFarland 2009b; Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000, p.5; Goldfarb 2004, p.15; Stevens 2014, p.61). Other provinces, such as Nova Scotia, quickly followed suit in the mid-nineties (McFarland 2000a, pp.1-2). Both provinces offered incentives to attract call center companies to their province, although how these were administered differed (McFarland 2009a, p.2). Additionally, ‘in March 2000, a \$65 million Economic Adjustment Fund was established by the government of Canada as “its response to the restructuring and privatization of the Cape Breton Development Corporation (DEVCO) and the closing of the last of its coal mines”’ (McFarland 2009a, p.3). The jobs that are being created in these provinces are largely ‘non-unionized and insecure’ (McFarland 2009a, p.1; McFarland 2009b, p.33). Similar efforts took place in central Canada as well against the backdrop of deindustrialization (Guard et al. 2006).

In particular, Ontario—the country’s ‘largest province and industrial heartland’ (Wolfe and Gertler 2001, p.575)—experienced a significant decline in manufacturing beginning in 2000 (Tiessen 2014, p.5; Constantelos 2014, p.828). As Tiessen notes, ‘at the turn of the century, manufacturing jobs made up more than 18% of Ontario’s labour market. By the end of 2013, after shedding 290,000 jobs over 13 years, the manufacturing sector represents only 11% of the jobs in Ontario’s labour market’ (2014, p.5). In light of this, many parts of the province pursued a ‘call center ready policy’ (Guard et al. 2006, p.279). Among other factors, the creation of call center programs at community colleges were meant to attract businesses to the province (Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000, p.6). And more recently, in 2006, the Ontario provincial government added several types of call center agents to the list of occupations that were eligible to receive an ‘Apprenticeship

Training Tax Credit’ (van Wageningen, 2013, May 3; Mills, 2013, May 24; Pilienci, 2008, June 3).¹¹⁸ Companies such as Dell were quick to take advantage of the provincial tax credit, reportedly receiving over 11 million dollars toward workers’ salaries at its Ottawa call center, which is no longer in operation (Pilienci, 2008, June 3). Although, the tax credit for these positions was eliminated in 2013 in light of low completion rates (Mills, 2013, May 24; van Wageningen, 2013, May 3), which sparked negative reactions from various Ontario mayors, who saw the credit as a major selling point to call center companies looking to set up shop in their towns (Mills 2013, May 24; van Wageningen 2013, May 3).

While this dissertation focuses particularly on the experiences of former transnational call center workers within the province of Ontario, it is important to highlight the ways in which this case study is still very much transnational in nature. First, Canadian provinces—including Ontario—have been viewed as attractive locations for outsourcing (or rather, ‘inshoring’ (Silcoff 2012) or ‘nearshoring’¹¹⁹) call center employment by many American and Canadian companies. As Stevens explains, ‘attempts by multinational corporations to establish call centers in Mumbai, Bangalore, and the National Capital Region of India, for example, are met with a host of economic, social, and even cultural

¹¹⁸ As van Wageningen (2013, May 3) explains, ‘Ontario’s Apprenticeship Training Tax was introduced in 2004 to encourage business to hire and train skilled trades and apprentices. It provides business with a 35-45 per cent refundable tax credit on the salaries and wages paid to eligible apprentices in designated construction, industrial, motive power and service trades.’

¹¹⁹ As Kvedaravičienė notes, nearshoring involves ‘sourcing service activities to a foreign, lower-wage country that is relatively close in distance and time zone. The customer expects to benefit from one or more of the following constructs of proximity: geographic, temporal, cultural, linguistic, political or historical linkages’ (2008, p.563).

barriers. In the past four years, a growing number of British, American, and Canadian firms have even recalled their call center labor forces back to “home shores.” Major players like BCE Inc., American Express Canada, Sears, and others have brought thousands of call center jobs back to Canada from facilities in India and the Philippines’ (2014, p.3). Canada is seen as a favorable location for call center services for a variety of reasons, including (among other factors): geographical proximity to the U.S., government incentives, the highly educated labor force found in particular call center heavy regions in the country, as well as the added benefit of bilingualism in particular provinces such as New Brunswick (Hasler, n.d.; Kvedaravičienė 2008; Silcoff 2012; FIP Associates, n.d.; Vincent and McKeown 2008; Goldfarb 2004; Stevens 2014).¹²⁰

However, another major driving force behind having call centers located within Canada is the perceived cultural familiarity that Canadians have with American customers. There has been a considerable move on the part of the many American (and some Canadian) firms to re-shore, inshore, or nearshore their call center labor to their neighbors to the North, as opposed to other countries, such as India, for this reason. As one Canadian call/contact center company’s website notes,

While it is difficult to measure, cultural alignment criteria should not be overlooked when outsourcing your center. Going offshore will most certainly

¹²⁰ As Kvedaravičienė explains, ‘Canada for US and Ireland for UK are matured nearshoring markets. Lower cost structures in Canada mean that service providers can undercut local US operators by 20 to 25 per cent. Factors, other than cost, are Canada’s proximity and time zone alignment, its language, cultural and legal affinity, its large pool of highly skilled IT resources, its technological universities and specialist IT-training institutions, and its advanced IT infrastructure with extensive broadband capabilities’ (2008, p.567).

challenge your ability to minimize language and cultural differences. Companies like Delta Airlines had to move call center operations back to the US because angry customers wanted better English. Because of news media, television shows, and basic geography, the Canadian culture is inherently intertwined with American culture. It's likely your customers wouldn't even know they are talking to a Canadian versus an American. Big city consumers like New Yorkers are known for their affinity to save the niceties for their mothers and fathers—not the consumer brands they buy products and services from. Which makes Canada, and Nova Scotia, a perfect place to locate a call center to support the high expectations of today's urban consumer. For example, Halifax is widely known for its friendly populous and a service mindset—just Google it! Historically and culturally, we are simply hardwired to be empathetic and understanding (Hasler, n.d.).¹²¹

Here, Canada is presented as the friendly Northern neighbor ready and willing to attend to the customer service needs of citizens South of the border. This issue—i.e. cultural proximity—came up during more than one interview. For example, in discussing his experience of speaking with US customers, in particular, Southern US customers, John recalled that,

there was also the ethnic thing where it was encouraged, to pick up, like, like local facts about like the Carolinas, like I know Michael Jordan played for North Carolina, so that was easy. I also know about baseball like crazy so there was all these baseball teams I could talk about, so it was cultural idioms to keep in mind. *And there was also the assumed racism of the South, like, they wouldn't want to talk to somebody that sounds like they're Indian or Chinese'* (Interview, 2014, emphasis added).¹²²

¹²¹ Interestingly the presentation of Nova Scotia (and, in some cases, Atlantic Canada in general) as an inherently 'friendly' or as possessing a 'service mindset' is problematic. In doing so, there is an effort being made to feminize the entire region's workforce by painting them as the caring, helpful, and polite service worker that serves as the central gendered trope around which call center labor is organized. Here, the skill of customer service within the region—much like in the case with women workers in the industry overall—is presented as natural, which therefore makes it open to being perceived as less valuable (Huws 2012, p.5).

¹²² Also, interestingly, in some cases, as John highlighted, being a transnational call center worker in Canada, as opposed to a call center worker in another country, such as India, would work to 'diffuse' difficult interactions with angry customers (in this case,

Further, when I asked John if he felt that these customers were relieved to be talking with a call center agent who was ‘semi-relatable’ to them, he noted that,

[...] the [customers] who were just like left on hold, and just like forgotten about, or whatever, or calls dropped like a few times, they would get really pissed off. And *they would almost ask “where are you from?” as like a [way of getting at] “are you competent enough? Am I talking to somebody, like a lower class person in India?” Or something like that. And it was often, yeah, seemed like they were afraid we didn’t understand them* (Interview, John, 2014, emphasis added).¹²³

Here the Canadian (or North American, more broadly speaking) customer service agent is problematically perceived as more competent, more reliable, and more knowledgeable, simply based on their geographical location. This attitude is not uncommon, and again, has played a key role in various American and Canadian companies relocating previously outsourced, or offshored, call center labor back Canada and the US.¹²⁴ As a recent Globe

from the Southern U.S.). When asked if he ever experienced customers being upset about the outsourcing of call center jobs to countries other than the U.S. or Canada, John explained that, ‘yeah, totally. They would call expecting to talk to somebody in India. And they would often be, because they were from the South, like “who am I talking to” [in Southern accent], “where you at, where you at?” [in Southern accent]. I’m like, “oh, I’m in [a Canadian city]. He’s like...they would always think it was [another city in the U.S. with a similar name] [...]’¹²² When I told them that, like, “Oh, I’m from Canada, we’re in [this Canadian city]” and they’re like “oh, crazy man, I love Canadians!” [in Southern accent]. And it would be like it diffused, *we were able to, with our Canadian-ness diffuse situations real easily*. Just say that “oh, yeah man, I’m from Canada, we just have this call center as a client” [...] (Interview, John, 2014, emphasis added).

¹²³ Although, it should be noted that even call center workers working in Canada can, in some cases, be subject to this type of discrimination as well. One interviewee, Martin (Interview, 2014)—who had recently moved to Canada while employed at a call center that handled customer service and technical support for a telephone company—explained that workers such as himself potentially face language and cultural barriers with the customers that they are serving, which, he noted, can lead to even more difficult interactions on a daily basis.

¹²⁴ For example, as the Globe and Mail article reports, ““Like a lot of providers, while there were certain cost advantages, the customer service experience is fundamental to

and Mail article noted, ‘it’s an uncomfortable truth that many people in developed countries have reacted negatively when they perceive the service representative on the phone is located overseas—particularly when they believe those people are taking jobs from their unemployed citizens, said David Filwood, a Vancouver-based industry expert’ (Silcoff 2012). The article continues, noting that ““in any Western countries that have seen call centre jobs destroyed and outsourced, the consumers hate it,” Mr. Filwood said. “They don’t like the service, the cultural satisfaction is lower. *It’s not a racist issue; people relate over the phone to people they perceive as being from their region*”” (Silcoff, 2012, emphasis added).

Following from this, it is not difficult to see why Bonacich et al. assert that there is a noticeable ‘racialization of labour’ present within the transnational call center industry (2008, pp.350-351).¹²⁵ As the authors highlight,

Indian call center workers are subject to a host of psychological stresses that attack their identity and subjectivity. For example, many are forced to change their Indian names to Anglo names so as to appear more “American” (read White) to their U.S. customers. In addition, they are forced to adopt fictional U.S. lives, such as imaginary Anglo parents, favorite TV shows, and universities they attended in the United States. If Indian call centers had nothing to with Indian workers’ global racialized status, they would not be forced to abandon their

American Express,” said American Express Canada general manager Andrew Carlton, whose company moved 200 call centre jobs back from India to Markham, Ont., four years ago. “We believed that by repatriating some of these volumes we’d enhance customer service” (Silcoff, 2012).

¹²⁵ Further, as Stevens highlights, ‘despite the gendered nature of the industry, this identity and platform for inequality is “eclipsed” by racial hierarchies embedded in transnational call center work, to use Mirchandani’s (2005) phrase. Control over emotive reactions contains additional significance when agents attempt to deal with racism by customers. Requiring workers to undergo “accent neutralization” and assume supposedly western identities and names is part of this hierarchy’ (2014, p.9).

Indian identity while working. TNCs profit both economically and culturally from “Whitening” their racialized Indian labor force because they are paying Indian College graduates one tenth of the wages of college graduates in the United States while reaping cultural capital from the appearance of having white U.S. workers. This process masks the racialized labor forces employed by TNCs, making them more palatable to U.S. consumers, while simultaneously culturally colonizing their racialized Indian workers (Bonacich et al. 2008, pp.350-351).

Although, even despite these problematic measures to ‘Americanize’ Indian call center workers, there has still been move on the part of various North American companies to reshore, or nearshore their call center services to Canada. As noted, in this racialized global economic context, Canada is easily packaged and sold as the friendly neighbor to the North for U.S. call center companies (and their American customers), as workers are seen as linguistically and culturally similar. Thus, the Canadian call center workers’ experience is inextricably linked to transnational call center workers in other countries, such as India, as they are very problematically defined and addressed in relation to the presumably non-White foreign ‘Other.’ Put simply, in several (but certainly not all) cases, call center jobs have been opened and made available to Canadian (and American) workers as a direct result of customers being unsatisfied with the prospect of dealing with a customer service agent located in India, or somewhere else they perceive as ‘foreign.’ Here, by utilizing the FEPGE approach—in particular, by focusing on gendered and racialized aspects of the relationship between the everyday and the global—one is able to more clearly see how this transnational industry structures and impacts Canadian call center workers’ everyday experiences within the workplace, as well as the call center agents’ lives outside of this context, and importantly points to the intimate connections between these workers.

The nearshoring of U.S. call center jobs to Canada has been potentially jeopardized by two primary factors: U.S. legislation, and the rising costs of operating in Canada (Stevens 2014). Although the latter has perhaps become less of an issue recently, as ‘the Canadian dollar loonie slipped below the 70-cent US level for the first time since 2003’ in 2016 (Evans 2016). As Stevens explains, ‘in 2004, five U.S. states enacted anti-outsourcing legislation and by 2005 thirty-six states have brought forward at least 100 bills to limit the offshoring of service activities, many of which sought to restrict the use of foreign call center operations specifically (Le Goff 2005)’ (2014, p.53). He continues, noting that ‘Canadian call center industry groups in turn predicted that state-level and national legislation could result in the loss of thousands of jobs if companies were prevented from establishing facilities in Canada. Most recently, lawmakers in the United States introduced the *Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act*, which would require the Secretary of Labor to make available a list of employers that relocate a call center overseas and to make these companies ineligible for Federal grants’ (Stevens 2014, pp.53-54).

Further, Canadian call center workers can be seen to be situated within a broader transnational context, as they are still very much interacting across these boundaries on a daily basis—aiding customers in the U.S. and other countries, as well as having regular interactions with workers in other parts of the world as part of their job—despite being located within fixed national borders. As such, this type of labour relies on daily transnational connections. For example, Martin (Interview, 2014) explained that workers located in Northern Africa did all of the scheduling of shifts for the call center where he

worked in Ontario. Given both of these factors it is easier to see how this case can be viewed—and situated—within a larger transnational context, and why it holds such great potential to reveal insights about the global economy.

Call centers, much like other transnationally situated service industries, serve as examples of the ‘global feminization of labor,’ wherein there has been a marked ‘increase in women’s flexible, deregulated employment and by the expansion of part-time, casual, and seasonal employment practices’ (Bonds 2006, p.33). As mentioned earlier, these conditions have had serious implications for the types of resistance practices available to many workers in this economic environment. Although, as Holman et al. (2007)¹²⁶ assert, it is important to keep in mind that there are several differences between call centers that are located within this transnational, or ‘global’ industry, and that in fact, ‘the globalization of call center activities has a remarkably national face’ (p.v; see also Huws 2009, p.1). The most important source of differentiation between call centers, they argue, can be found in the varied national economic and political systems within which they are situated (Holman et al. 2007, p.vi; see also Lindgren and Sederblad 2006, p.192). They note that call centers are located within ‘coordinated or ‘social market’ economies’ (e.g. France, Germany), ‘liberal market economies’ (e.g. Canada, the United States), and

¹²⁶ Holman et al.’s (2007) study serves to demonstrate the importance of studying call centers that are located both within the global South, as well as the global North, in order to get a fuller, more nuanced picture of the industry as a whole. I focus here, primarily on worker experiences within transnational call centers located within the province of Ontario. In doing so, I both situate my case study within the broader transnational call center industry that it is part of, as well as pay attention to potential local intervening factors that serve to shape the workplace conditions (and thus, worker actions) in the province. This is because, as Huws explains, ‘...specific location still makes a real difference’ (2009, p.7).

‘recently industrialized or transitional economies’ (e.g. Brazil, India), and these national economic systems largely impact various factors within the call center, such as rates of turnover, the presence or absence of collective representation, wage dispersion, job quality, as well as the organization of work (Holman et al. 2007, p.vi).

However, while Holman et al.’s study would seem to indicate great divergence between call centers around the world, their findings actually suggest that, in a number of ways, call centers in ‘liberal market economies’ (such as Canada) may actually have more in common with call centers in ‘recently industrialized economies’ (such as India), rather than those in ‘coordinated economies.’ As they note, ‘collective representation is the lowest in liberal market economies (22%) and intermediate in industrializing countries (36%)’ (Holman et al. 2007, p.vii). Further, rates of turnover in call centers in liberal countries are closer to rates in industrializing countries than they are to coordinated countries (2007, p.ix). This is also true in regard to job quality (2007, p.x). Interestingly, McFarland (2002) has notably compared the call centers located in New Brunswick to the ‘maquiladoras’ found throughout Mexico.¹²⁷ This is because the Business Process Outsourcers (BPOs) that set up shop within the province (as well as within region, and Canada in general) are notoriously ‘footloose’ and prone to capital flight (McFarland 2009, p.22; McFarland 2004, p.252), which greatly affects worker behavior.

¹²⁷ One can also easily apply this designation to call centers in Nova Scotia (and call centers in other provinces in Canada as well) as well because, as McFarland herself has noted, the call center jobs in the province are ‘the same non-unionized, low paying, stressful and insecure jobs [that are found in New Brunswick]’ (2009, p.25-26).

McFarland's comparison is consistent with MacDonald's analysis of the spatial and gendered dimensions of precarious employment, in which she notes that '...a poor region may have more in common with a neighboring [or even a non-neighboring region] in a different country than with a richer region in the same country' (2009, p.2).¹²⁸ As she highlights, 'Atlantic Canada (composed of four provinces) has lower wages, higher unemployment rates, more temporary jobs, and higher earnings inequality than other regions in Canada' (2009, p.2). Accordingly, many call centers have been drawn to the region in response to these 'labour market conditions' (2009, p.3) as they have been in other 'marginal' regions around the world (Burgess and Connell 2006, p.10; Srivastava and Theodore 2006, p.20-21). Further, as MacDonald importantly notes, this regional concentration of precarious employment may also have a significant gendered dimension because of its focus on 'female dominated service jobs' (2009, p.3). In general, the high presence of female workers within the industry (around seventy per cent worldwide) is significant (Bonds 2006, p.2006; McFarland 2002, pp.65-66) because the gendered composition of the call center workforce is one characteristic of the industry that holds true regardless of the nation (or region) the call center is located within. Thus, while it is not possible to consider the call centers located within Ontario—such as the ones my interviewees were employed in—as necessarily representative of the entire global call center industry, it is possible to consider these call centers within a transnational context in which they share a great deal of commonalities with other call centers located in other regions around the world. And further, that these commonalities—along with additional

¹²⁸ Holman et al.'s (2007) study would certainly seem to suggest that this is true, especially when one looks at workers employed within a particular industry that has locations in many regions worldwide.

local factors (Huws 2009, p.7)¹²⁹—serve to shape and inform the everyday experiences and actions of call center workers in the region (Burgess and Connell 2006, p.10).

In general, the processes of global economic restructuring have had many effects for workers around the world—many of which have been highly gendered (Brodie 1994, p.46; Pyle and Ward 2003, p.463). As Brodie notes, ‘although the discourse about global restructuring is invariably cast in gender-neutral terms, gender-sensitive analyses have increasingly demonstrated that women, in both First and Third World countries are bearing the burden of economic adjustment’ (1994, p.46). One of the most pronounced effects of this restructuring has been the subsequent ‘feminization’ of certain industries within the global economy. As Standing explains, the ‘feminization of labor’ refers both to the increased presence of women in the economy, especially within jobs that have been traditionally held by male workers, as well as the decline and erosion of labor regulations that have accompanied these shifts (1989, p.1077).

The current, highly gendered, global division of labor has relied on the continued invocations of notions of ‘femininity,’ especially within the transnational manufacturing and service industries, which have served to portray women workers as inherently suited for certain types of work—usually the lowest paid and most precarious forms of employment. Salzinger discusses extensively the degree to which the transnational manufacturing industry—in particular the Mexican maquiladora industry—has been

¹²⁹ Huws importantly highlights that call center workers are positioned at the ‘interface’ between ‘the local and the global’ (2009, p.1) and therefore, one must consider both contexts when analyzing the everyday realities of call center workers, as both of these contexts serve to inform worker’s actions.

shaped by a pervasive ‘trope of productive femininity’ (2003, pp.14-15).¹³⁰ As Salzinger explains, this trope, which is based on ‘the notion of the “always-already” docile, dexterous, and cheap woman’ is a ‘meaning structure through which workers, potential and actual, are addressed and understood, and around which production itself is designed’ (2003, pp.10-15). Transnational service industries—such as call centers—have also been shaped by the continued invocations of a ‘trope of femininity.’ However, within the call center industry, the gendered trope centers more around the perceived emotional and caring qualities of women, rather than their dexterity or docility, per se (Bonds 2006, p.37; Mulholland 2002, p.296; Buchanan 2002, pp.59-61). This is because within the call center industry, employers rely on, what I would term, a ‘trope of *emotive* femininity’¹³¹ rather than a ‘trope of productive femininity.’¹³² Here Hochschild’s work on ‘emotional labor’ is instructive (Buchanan 2002, p.59). In her study of flight attendants in the United States, Hochschild found that the industry had increasingly come to rely on, and exploit, workers’ emotions and feelings (1993, p.329). As a participant in her study notes, because of women’s supposedly natural emotional qualities they made up the bulk of the

¹³⁰ See also Marchand and Runyon (2000, p.8); Benería (2003, p.78); Nagar et. al (2002, p.261); Pyle and Ward (2003, p.467); Mills (2003, pp.43-48).

¹³¹ Grossman (2012, p.71) makes a similar point, noting, ‘the service sector counterpart to the discourse of ‘nimble fingers,’ might be ‘caring hearts,’ a trope of femininity that genders certain labour as female, and justifies the low wages paid to health care providers (Dryer et al, 2008; Baines, 2006; Findlay et al, 2009), food service workers (McKie et al, 2009), retail workers (Pettinger, 2005), and other personal service jobs (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002).’

¹³² Although, as Grossman points out, ‘deference’ was also a central part of Hochschild’s formulation of emotional labour (2012, p.66), so the trope of emotive femininity and the trope of productive femininity outlined by Salzinger can be seen to share some commonalities. As Grossman explains, ‘a great deal of emotional labour focuses on deference, a behavioural skill for which, Hochschild observes, women are culturally trained’ (2012, p.66). Thank you also to Kate Bedford, who after reading a very early draft of the arguments and material presented in my dissertation, similarly noted that these two gendered tropes are not entirely separate.

flight attendant workforce (Hochschild 1993, p.329). A comparable trend can be evidenced within the call center industry that similarly puts a premium on a representative's ability to be personable, friendly, and caring with customers¹³³—qualities that women workers are seen to inherently possess (Bonds 2006, p.37). This largely accounts for the fact that the majority of call center positions—approximately seventy percent worldwide—are filled by women workers, with women usually occupying the 'lower-pay' positions within the industry (Bonds 2006, p.35; McFarland 2002, pp.65-66; Burgess and Connell 2006, p.12; Domingo-Cabarrubias 2012, p.78).

Thus, the transnational call center is a highly feminized industry—not just as a result of the high percentage of women employed in call centers around the world—but because women's employment in this context is structured on highly gendered notions of skill and the assumption of inherent traits that make them best suited for service work (Domingo-Cabarrubias 2012, pp.77-78; Grossman 2012, p.71). As Huws notes, 'one important point for understanding the extraordinary persistence of gendered divisions of labour is the problematic interface between the household and the labour market. This can be argued to affect the different value of women's and men's labour, the different places women

¹³³ Anna noted that her employer (a transnational financial institution) suggested using customer's personal account information in an effort to make a connection with them, when they called in. As she explains, '[...] you were encouraged to create a relationship with them. So, if you see, like, 'cause whenever, I think it's kind of creepy, but whenever you're like looking through, 'cause whenever you answer a call you have to quickly look through all the screens to like see where they shopped, or if there's unusual activity in their accounts and stuff, so if you see like that they shopped at Sportchek a lot, or if you see that they, like, they travel or something, then you kind of bring up a subject that relates to it without telling them that you know that' (Interview, Anna, 2014). However, she also noted that, while she did make an effort to 'connect' with customers, rather than being 'cold or neutral' with them, she did not use their personal spending habits to do so.

and men occupy in the occupational division of labour and the different positions women and men occupy in social hierarchies' (2012, p.2). As Huws explains,

The first aspect relates to the scarcity of skills, the degree to which these skills are formally recognized and certified and the value that holding them confers on the owner in the labour market. [...] skills which all women are supposed to possess as a necessary condition for fulfilling their designated role in the domestic division of labour have, by definition, no scarcity whatsoever on the labour market. Regardless of how difficult they may actually be to perform well, if every other woman in the neighbourhood also knows how to carry them out, and in the absence of any other social sanctions, it will always be possible for an employer to access these skills at low cost. This is part (though only part) of the explanation why cleaning, cooking and childcare skills command a low value on the labour market. It is also the explanation why these jobs tend to be carried out by women in both paid and unpaid capacities (2012, p.5).

Following from Huws' analysis, we can see that women workers within the transnational call center industry—whose work is centrally focused on the provision of highly feminized care and emotional labour—are understood, addressed, and remunerated in relation to the perceived 'scarcity' of these skills.

As Balka aptly notes, 'in the absence of an analysis of the everyday labour (both paid and unpaid), it is easy to "miss" the significance of sex in political economy. Random people don't fill random jobs in the provision of telecommunications services—those jobs are filled by workers of a particular sex' (2002, p.62; see also Forseth 2005, p.443). Indeed, as Domingo-Cabarrubias highlights, 'Amante's findings are consistent with that of Belt et al. (2002) in European call centers, where salaries were significantly higher in the computer services call centers (for the sales and technical support roles)—where the proportion of male workers was highest' (2012, p.87). Domingo-Cabarrubias continues,

‘the study revealed that men vastly outnumbered women in the specialised technical support roles in the computer service call centers such as on software help-desks, and women tended to be concentrated on the whole in customer service roles. In addition, the work was least routinized, and monitoring and control practices least stringently used in the technical support roles in the computer services call centers, where males made up [the] majority of employees’ (2012, p.87).¹³⁴ Here we see echoes of Camp’s analysis of gendered opportunity structures of slave resistance within antebellum America (presented earlier in chapter one)—whereby the men who were slaves—as a result of the gendered division of labour on the plantation—were allowed greater freedom to leave the plantation, which resulted in higher numbers of men becoming ‘permanent fugitives’ (Camp 2004, pp.36-38; Camp 2002, pp. 3-4).

In addressing the gendered nature of the call center industry, one of the female call center employees that I interviewed had reflected on this point after leaving the industry, noting,

I often wonder why it was a majority of women on the floor and I mean since then I’ve learned a lot about gendered power structures so I can understand why management was mostly male [...] but I wonder what it is about customer service that attracts mostly women? It’s not like [it actually] attracts, it’s more like that’s one of the choices that’s available to you [...]. It’s kind of [...]—customer service roles have aspects of gender, I think, gender roles that have been engrained into women, like servitude, basically, and politeness and being able to deal with anger in a way that can calm the situation, or yeah, so I think it’s structural (Interview, Moira, 2014).

¹³⁴ See also Russell 2005 (pp.198-199), who notes a similar gendered division of labour within the Canadian call center industry.

When I further probed whether there she thought that there was something at odds, or contradictory, about the fact that as a feminized service based industry women are hired because they have these apparent innate skills that are viewed as important in the industry, but then once you are working there you are then told to be controlled with your emotional responses on phone (which she had earlier mentioned in the interview), she responded,

I wonder if it's [that] women are favored for the job, or if that's combined maybe with the choices that are available in terms of the job market. It seems to be mostly customer service industries that, that people who have for example precarious status, or less privilege in the world based on gender can apply for (Interview, Moira, 2014).

Here, Moira touches both on the gendered stereotypes—primarily the trope of emotive femininity—which underpins the industry, as well as the ways in which precarious labour is largely a gendered experience (especially in relation to the call center industry, wherein call centers can, in most cases, freely move from one location to another).¹³⁵

¹³⁵ While not specifically referencing gender, Gabrielle did speak more directly to the precarious nature of work within the transnational call center industry—noting that more than one of the call centers where she had been employed had closed. In one case, she recalls that, '[the call center] ended up closing at the end. And, I think they outsourced it and then they came back to town, but I was already working elsewhere. [...] No [there wasn't really any warning]. I, again, I was one of the top callers, so I was kept latest. I was the last person on my team that was still there. So, I guess technically, I had warning, because people had already been laid off. And I was kept, me, me and my supervisor were the last two were on our team that were left. [...] Well, we knew we were all going, the center was closing. But they still had some contracts to finish, so then they, like in the span of about two weeks, they laid off the whole floor, which was a thousand people. So [...] it was like a week or two and I knew that I was, you know, they told me, that they were going to keep me on 'til the end because [of my numbers] (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014, emphasis in interview).

Another interviewee, John, noted that there were highly problematic racialized and gendered assumptions, particularly around authority, which structured the interactions call center agents had over the phone, especially when handling calls from customers in the Southern United States. As he explains,

...the male voice over the phone, is, it tends to...it tends to clam people down, is how they said it to us. So *they encouraged the female workers to like speak deeper, or more calm*, 'cause they said, and, it was either in not so many words, or in these words, I can't remember because it was so long ago, but they, they said basically that *the sound of a loud female voice sounds like yelling, or shrill, or something, and it offsets them*, and because we're calling people from the South[ern United States], they played on our cultural stereotypes that we had of them. *That they would rather talk to a man, or something like that...this is a man's business, right, shit like that. And also, there was the assumption that the women who would call from there were like housewives and they're used to being told by a man what to do. So, there was, like, very clear ways that I could use my gender in my...to my benefit* (Interview, John, 2014, emphasis added).¹³⁶

Patricia noted that, in her experience, men were able to last longer working at the call center where she had worked, explaining that:

I'd always heard from people working in call centers, like, "oh yeah, you're not going to last," "it's not gonna...you're not going to be able to do it for a long period of time," and I didn't find that, necessarily. I did find that it's stressful, and that it's monotonous, and all those kind of things. But I guess, that just, like I went into it knowing that. I didn't expect it to be any different than what it was.

¹³⁶ A similar example was provided by Forseth, who notes that, 'a young, female manager in the airline industries told us how it was easier being a man in difficult customer interactions, especially if he was tall and with [a] deep voice (Forseth, 2005). Such bodily aspects were related to authority and masculinity. She was conscious of deliberately demonstrating her competence. In addition to she had developed a conscious strategy for building authority by being firm in her response and wearing high-heeled shoes to improve her height and this counteract subordination. [...] Professional skills are not always sufficient in signaling authority and competence and characteristics such as age, gender, class, ethnicity, and bodily representation serve as an external signaling function towards customers' (2005, p.444).

Which meant that I, I guess I lasted longer than most people do. Although I do know of people that I worked with at [that call center] that are still there. But again, I think it's like it's males that are still working there, I think...probably not a lot of, like, females that are still there. [...] It might have been [because], like, I think it was mostly male run. So, like the head people were male, and that might have had a, an impact on it. That they're...I guess it always seemed that, like, they were given more leeway than others. Like, even in the way that the calls were handled. There would be less criticism of their handling of a call than of a female's handling of a call. [...] So I think that maybe there was, there were less pressures for them. And, I mean, even that might have been to try and keep enough men working there, so that it was, like, diverse enough and it wasn't all women (Interview, Patricia, 2014).

Here, Patricia's comments reveal the highly gendered nature of work within the call center workplace—with male workers receiving preferential treatment by employers, simply because they are male, despite the fact that women are (problematically) seen as naturally possessing the skills required for this type of labour. Although, John noted that, in his experience, the women workers employed at the call center where he worked actually stayed longer than the (younger) male workers, but because of their need to provide for their families (Interview, John, 2014).

Further, Gabrielle noted, that the gender (and cultural backgrounds) of the supervisors in the call centers where she worked had a big impact on her workplace experiences. When asked how—if at all—her gendered mattered within the call centers, she responded,

...it mattered a lot in [one call center] because of the management situation. And it was also that it was very multicultural and depending on your culture you had different beliefs about what it was to be a woman and what your job was and what your roles were. So there was a lot of more traditional gender roles in [this call center]. Which at times were not very comfortable for me because I like to speak my mind and do what I want to do and, you know, be respected for my knowledge and, you know, things like that, and not be in trouble for people being attracted to me. And...and major issues at [that call center]. Gender didn't seem to matter

much at most of the other ones [call centers where I worked]. I don't think so. And it also depended on like what gender your supervisors were, right because, if you have all male, like, management, male management, male supervisors, male this, they identify with the boys and [not] us, they identify with the practices that the guys are doing and if you are not in those practices then you're clearly doing it wrong. And so then there's that whole push back in that way. But if you're in an environment with there are supervisors that are female, well they've already climbed the ranks as women, they know that there are different practices that you can use and that more can be successful than just this one way of doing things and that, you know, there are other ways to be a successful person and get your numbers than, you know, drive, drive, drive (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014).

Call center workers also regularly field calls from angry and irate customers (Domingo-Cabarrubias 2012, p.82), and as such their jobs are highly stressful, from both an emotional, as well as a psychological, standpoint. And John's comments suggest that this emotional and psychological stress may be gendered, to a certain degree. As he notes,

...I didn't care enough to about the job, so I never would get stressed out and I don't get...I'm so skilled at customer service and multitasking in that regard that you would never know that I was stressed. Like my voice would stay down like this as well. [...] oh, others, sorry, others would get stressed, though. The people would freak out and get really stressed, it was just me that would not be stressed. [...] Oh, people would just start crying and shit. Like, yeah, like, there's a lot of crying, actually, which I, I never understood [...] it was often times, like those, the kind of 40 year old women [that would cry], but not exclusively. But I just feel like a lot of that came from, *they had more fear of getting fired*, right, and there was more pressure on them. So I think it was both being yelled at on the phone, or just like, it was the first time they've ever done customer service, right. And also the, I think partly *due to the pressure that they faced because they're, you know, wage earners for their family as well*. [...] I didn't know the women so I didn't know what their home life was like, but I did know that they were often recent immigrants from certain regions of the country as well as with like a husband, and at least two kids, like 'cause they would talk about their, their home life a little bit, or you'd hear them talking to each other in the lunchroom. But yeah, it generally seemed like, as comes with the territory of being a new immigrant to a country, it's, you know, it's tough, right. *So, I think a lot of it was actually like home life that boils over 'cause, yeah, like I didn't have a care in the world, because I'm like, at the time, a young Caucasian male who lives with his parents rent free. Like I didn't really have a concern in the world, so why would*

anything bother me, right? My main concern was running around to the bars and stuff (Interview, John, 2014, emphasis added).

While male and female employees at a call center are both subjected to the often times highly stressful customer interactions that come with this type of work, John's comments reveal that experience of on the job stress may also be gendered. A similar point is presented by Domingo-Cabarets who asserts that 'while men and women may be similarly exposed to the same stressful working environment and demanding workload, the effects are not necessarily the same. The structural inequalities between women and men and the gender division of labor tends to place a higher burden on working women since they are in charge of unpaid and undervalued reproductive work to maintain and sustain their families' (2012, p.73). Domingo-Cabarrubias further notes that, 'the question of the gender-differentiated effect of call center work on women is by no means new. Taylor and Bain (2005) mentioned that women, who make up half the workforce, are particularly affected by conflicts between working hours and the demands of task performance, and domestic, family and social responsibilities and expectations' (2012, p.84). In the example of the female employees discussed by John, the stakes involved in their call center employment were much higher than for him, given their family responsibilities, which in turn impacted their daily experiences of this labour. Although, as Forseth highlights, '[it is possible] that male workers do not let bad manners and rude behavior from customers bother them. For men, doing this kind of work this might imply a loss of status or feminization from the start. Leidner (1991) for instance, found that male sales agents reinterpreted situations of abuse by not letting it affect them, as they were in charge of the interaction' (2005, p.454). She continues, 'furthermore, men in such

positions may not be expected to play the part of the exceptionally caring, considerate and service-minded employees as the women...’ (Forseth 2005, p.454).

Another participant, Patricia, noted that the stress of the job even (on some occasions) impacted her after she had left work for the day. As she explains, ‘I just kind of leave work at work. But, [...] sometimes I would, I would like wake up in the middle of the night thinking I was at work. And like, that I was waiting for, like it was, it was just because it’s, just like constant. That would happen sometimes’ (Interview, Patricia, 2014). Sarah recalled that it was difficult to not take the stress of the job home with her after work. As she explains,

...especially when the situations were negative because like you almost felt betrayed by the customer, because, really, at the end of the day, you’re only trying to help them, and so when there was a lot of like frustration being expressed on their part I always would, would get emotionally, emotionally upset about it and would be like...my night would be ruined or my next day...*it wasn’t something that I could just forget about.* It wasn’t like I just hang up the phone call and would move onto the next one, [inaudible] not, it just kept building, and building, and building, like the stress, and, the sort of, the emotional frustration that came with that, with that job and it was something that, even now, I could say “oh, it’s just my job” right, but then you go home and you stew about it, or you go home and think about it. [...] ...you had to listen to them [the customers] [...] I mean, if you imagine the smiling idiot that’s nodding their head, like that’s literally you’re nodding your head on the other side of the phone, you know, just being like, “of course, sir,” “yes, I understand you’re frustrated,” “let’s try to do this,” “yeah, I understand you’re frustrated,” “yeah, I can, I can understand why that would be frustrating for you, let’s try to do this,” [inaudible] *You become like this robot.* You just have to answer yes and keep nodding and smiling [...] (Interview, Sarah, 2014, emphasis added).

Here, Sarah’s comments perfectly highlight the degree to which workers within the call center industry are expected to provide emotional labour to their customers, and the

personal costs to agents in doing so. As Yagil notes, ‘service employees may psychologically distance themselves from a situation of abuse by using emotional display and hiding behind a façade while emotionally disconnecting themselves from the situation’ (2008, p.148).

Another participant, Samuel (Interview, 2014), noted that his worst call while working at the call center involved receiving a death threat from a customer over the phone. Jeremy also recounted two particularly troublesome encounters he had with people when he called to try and complete surveys. As he explains,

there were quite a few [calls] that were just straight up angry. And, and, and just, yeah, angry and just like furious people. They would just like [say things like] “F You!” or do something really rude. Like, I had this one guy I asked “can I, can I—‘cause part of the introduction is we have to ask the head of the household to do the survey, so—I asked, may I speak to the head of your household?” and then this man just said “okay, just a second” and he put his [young] daughter on the phone and the daughter just liked screamed at me for like, just like, when I, when I asked her questions and they just like...they did that for like 40 seconds, and they just hung up on me. I was just like, you don’t have to be rude like this, you can just say “oh, I’m not interested” (Interview, Jeremy, 2014).

He also detailed another one of his worst calls:

Another one was, ah, I wasn’t, because like sometimes you hear their tone of voice and know if they’re angry when we call them, but this guy he...he just sounded really calm and he agreed to do survey, and then I asked him the first question and then he, he just said, “so, what were you saying? You sound like you have a dick in your mouth.” And he just hung up. And I was just like, I just like, want to sucker punch him in the face (Interview, Jeremy, 2014).

One participant, Sarah, noted the frustrating inability to retaliate against angry and rude customers, due to company policies,

...I hated the job for lots of reasons. One, it was extremely, extremely...like I'm used to working in customer service, I worked in retail for seven years, but *there's something about a phone call that makes every person that's calling in an asshole, right, because you're not looking at them, so they can...they feel like a freedom, or a liberty, to say whatever it is that they want to you because there's no immediate ramification for them*, and especially at this call center. I don't know how it is at other call centers, but they...you're not allowed to defend yourself to a customer, so even if the customer is yelling and screaming at you...screaming at you and telling your whatever, or calling you whatever, you can only say "okay, yeah, would you like to speak to my supervisor?" like [inaudible] *I can't swear back at them, I can't yell at them. If I do then I get fired.* [...] We could never hang up the phone. No, because if we hung up the phone then that would be, like we would be reprimanded and given like a warning, like a strike against us for that, like sort of a three strikes you're out kind of thing. No, you were never allowed to hang up on a customer. So, I mean the verbal abuse that you face on a daily...and it is every day, I mean, it's about every phone call, and sometimes you get nice phone calls, but, you know, 50, or 60, or 70 percent of the day is people that are frustrated, and especially in technical support, because it's, they're dealing with a machine that's broken, right, that they've spent a lot of money on. They tend to... sort of, *you become the target for their frustrations*. And so every day it was a lot of that... (Interview, Sarah, 2014, emphasis added).¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Although, Sarah did interestingly note that, as a technical support representative, she felt she had more power with customers, than other types of call center agents, especially customer service representatives. As she states, '...the customer in this situation has no power, not like in customer service, where you [the customer] have power because you're unsatisfied and you're, you're...you have power against the, like the customer service representative who's trying to make you happy, 'cause you're at the complete whim of what the technical service agent is telling you. And, so I think that like because of that, there's no power imbalance because they need your help because before they can do anything, before they can call sales, or call customer service, they have to call technical support and we have to transfer them after we've determined that there's something wrong with the system or there's something wrong with the program that merits that they get a new one, and so then they're kind of at our mercy [...] I'm pretty sure that that impacted, to some extent, that we got less maybe, perhaps less harassed than in another situation because of, because of that power dynamic. It doesn't mean that we didn't get yelled at, but I think that a lot of the time the, the attacks were less personal, and more just people angry and I think it's because their computer wouldn't turn on, right, it wasn't so much with me because I wasn't saying what they wanted to hear' (Interview, Sarah, 2014). The issue of a power balances between customer service agents, and customers,

Ultimately, as Sarah details, call center workers often serve as emotional punching bags for angry or frustrated clients and customers, who translate their anger at certain companies (and the products and services that they offer) onto them, with little space to no space to fight back. As Forseth highlights, ‘service employees easily become organizational shock absorbers or a complaints counter for customers’ (2005, p.443). Indeed, ‘customer misbehavior is enhanced by the basic and widespread philosophy of service as pleasing customers, indulging them and giving them what they want, reflected in the slogan that the customer is always right. The acceptance of customer superiority implies, for customers as well as for service providers, that customers are entitled to misbehave, while service providers are expected to put up with such misbehaviors’ (Yagil 2008, p.142). Yagil continues, explaining that ‘this notion is often sanctioned by the organization and consequently is perceived by employees as a normal and inherent part of the service job (Fullerton & Punj, 2004)’ (2008, p.142). These difficult interactions can obviously have a negative impact on call center workers’ overall mental health. As Jackson explains, ‘workers experience dissonance when they are required to

also came up during Gabrielle’s interview. She asserts that, ‘...it’s different when people are calling into you, because then you...they’re calling to you, so if they’re being explicit you can just be like “don’t use that language, or I’m going to hang up the phone,” but when you’re calling them, you can’t use those threats because you need them. So, the outbound calling becomes more problematic than the inbound calling’ (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014). This issue was discussed by Yagil, who asserts that ‘according to the power dependence theory of social relations (Emerson, 1962), the more a person values resources controlled by another, the more dependent that person is and the less power he/she has in the relationship. [...] when the dependence on customers is low, service providers react to customer misbehavior with less restraint. A study of salespeople found that when most customers were women and male customers were not regarded as essential to the survival of the business, saleswomen responded to harassment assertively (Handy, 2006)’ (2008, p.145).

act pleasant with clients when they feel entirely otherwise. This increases anxiety, burnout, depression, and psychosomatic complaints' (2008, p.3).

Although, another participant that I spoke with, Layla, noted, some of the people who worked at her survey-based call center did take revenge on unkind and angry customers.

As she explains,

...if the clients said something rude to them, what [some of the people I worked with] would do is just, as a way to get back at them they would put back their name back in the call queue, and they would be called again...rather than taking them off. So...so yeah, so we would, if something like that happened we would take people off the call queue, but not always. [...] [And] you could set it up for, you know, first thing in the morning, set up the call. People did that and again, these are like, you know, either high school like seniors, or early college years, the older people wouldn't [inaudible] do these things.

(Interview, Layla, 2014).¹³⁸

However, in addition to dealing with irate customers (such as the ones mentioned above), women workers especially, are also potentially confronted with a dual experience of sexual harassment¹³⁹—both from their male coworkers within the call center, as well as from clients and customers that they are talking to on the telephone, while on the job.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Again, Layla's comments point to a connection between age and forms of worker resistance that are of a more everyday nature.

¹³⁹ Yagil notes that, 'findings have led to a suggestion (Gettman & Gelfand, 2007) that the standard definition of sexual harassment, which relies on the victim's sense of being harassed, may be too limited in the case of harassment by customers, because in the service industry sexual harassment is sometimes accepted as part of the job, and the victims actually deny its presence' (2008, p.144).

¹⁴⁰ While accounts of sexual harassment of women—of the women I interviewed directly, or female colleagues of the male interviewees—were quite common, none of the men that I interviewed reported experiencing any form of sexual harassment in the workplace. One participant, John, even joked with his response to this question, "I wish!" (Interview, 2014). However, Gabrielle noted that some of her male colleagues did

As Gettman and Gelfand assert, ‘much of the work in today’s service industries requires women to deal with people *outside* of their organizations, namely, customers and clients, yet research on sexual harassment has focused almost exclusively on sexual harassment *within* organizations’ (2007, p.757, emphasis in original; see also Yagil 2008, p.142).

They continue, noting that, ‘because the threat of harassment also operates at the boundaries of organizations, our existing models based solely on harassment inside organizations may be too restricted to adequately explain the harassment experiences of women in today’s economy’ (Gettman and Gelfand 2007, p.757). Both of these forms of sexual harassment were documented within the interviews conducted as part of this study.

In fact, as one of the participants, Moira, aptly states, ‘I definitely think that a call center is a really special environment where that [sexual harassment] is enabled’ (Interview, 2014). For example, one participant, Samuel—a former survey-based call center worker—provided accounts of his female colleagues facing sexual harassment on both these fronts.¹⁴¹ In regard to sexual harassment within the physical space of the call center,¹⁴² Samuel noted that his older male colleagues would ‘slap’ female coworkers’

experience sexual harassment over the phone. As she explains, ‘Sometimes [men were sexually harassed] mostly by other men. [...] Yeah, kind of like, “oh, do you swing that way?” and, like, you know, things like that. I don’t think, to my knowledge, it was...I’m sure it’s happened, but I don’t remember any women hitting on the guys, or if they did the guys didn’t see it as negative’ (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014).

¹⁴¹ This occurred despite the fact that sexual harassment training was provided in the workplace (Interview, Samuel, 2014).

¹⁴² Layla also noted experiencing sexual harassment within the financial services call center where she was employed. She explains that, ‘the person was very touchy-feeling, and it wasn’t just me I found out, I spoke to some, a coworker of mine [...] who later on became a supervisor, so, and he dealt with it. He...it was just, the person was, you know, didn’t respect your personal space and very too close, very touchy-feeling. And it turned out that he was like this with all, most other female employees as well. So, the person who was a friend of mine and I spoke to and he told me that others had approached him as well, so he spoke to the person and he took care of it. [...] And he didn’t get in trouble

‘butts’ if they did something for them (Interview, 2014). However, he stated that, ‘the women, they didn’t feel like they were minding it’ and ‘nobody said anything, because nobody thought it was a big deal. Because they seemed like they knew each other for the longest time. [...] The woman was not screaming or saying “stop!”’ (Interview, Samuel, 2014). While Samuel does not necessarily view these actions as a form of sexual harassment, they can—and should—definitely be classified as such (and are clearly inappropriate for the workplace). Also, his reading of the situation is incomplete as it fails to take into account what the women experiencing this *actually* felt about it. In addition to this form of harassment, Samuel noted another example, where one of his female colleagues was faced with an inappropriate caller. As he explains,

the customer on the phone was telling [my coworker] that...it’s a little bit explicit [...] he was basically, oh what’s the word? Sex talk? Sex talks? [...] English is not my first language. Anyways, [...] they would change the subject and tell [her] about how they want to get freaky and want to do some disgusting things to [my coworker]. [...] What he was telling her was explicit. I think it was in the bathtub or something and he was...he was...okay, he was rubbing his [penis] (Interview, Samuel, 2014).

or, because we didn’t...you know he was a nice person, we just, he just had no boundaries’ (Interview, Layla, 2014). Similarly, Patricia noted experiencing sexual harassment, both over the phone, and in person, at the hands of her supervisor. As she explains, ‘at [one of the call centers where I worked], the, my supervisor who kind of made me feel uncomfortable, sometimes. [...] and there was one of the calls at [another call center where I worked] one time where the, this guy was calling in and he was like at a hospital with some of his friends because he’d been in a car accident and he said, made some comment, like “oh she sounds hot.” [With the supervisor]...it was kind of like the way he would look at me or kind of the things he would talk about, just kind of be [inaudible] inappropriate nature. Like sexual. And, I think mainly it came, like, I think after I had, I kind of always felt uncomfortable around him, and I think after I stopped working there he, he made, he started being a little bit more forward about things’ (Interview, Patricia, 2014).

What is even more problematic about this encounter is the fact that it is all too common for women workers in the call center industry. Samuel remarked that he knew of other women in his call center who had handled inappropriate calls, and also, given how unsurprised the coworker referenced above was about having dealt with such a disturbing call, he had surmised that she had also had similar calls in the past (Interview, 2014).

Service encounters, such as those involved in call center customer service interactions, can lead to problematic misunderstandings between male clients, and female agents. As Gettman and Gelfand explain (in relation to service work, more generally), ‘women who are in a position of lesser power are more likely to be harassed. Additionally, men and women differ in their interpretations of friendly behavior, with men more likely to misperceive friendliness as a sign of romantic interest (Stockdale, 1993)’ (2007, p.759). They continue, noting, ‘therefore, in organizations with high pressure service climates where employees are under pressure to engage in friendly behaviors toward customers [such as in call centers], women will be more likely to be misunderstood by male customers as being romantically interested in them’ (Gettman and Gelfand 2007, p.759).

Overall, this dissertation aims to highlight that an important consequence of the ‘feminization’ of employment in these industries has been the narrowing of spaces for some groups of workers in the global economy to undertake open and collective forms of resistance (Hale 1996, p.9; Mills 2003, p.51). Overt forms of resistance in this new economic climate have been made increasingly difficult to undertake, especially for women workers due of their overrepresentation in the most precarious industries in the

global economy (Hale 1996, 13; Pyle and Ward 2003, p.471; Marchand and Runyan 2000, p.8; Mills 2003, p.43). The narrowing of spaces for overt and collective resistance, such as unionization and open forms of worker protest, within the global economy has in large part been due to the pervasive threat of ‘capital flight’ (Gibson-Graham 1996, p.122; Pyle and Ward 2003, 467; Hale 1996, p.10; Mills 2003, p.51; McFarland 2002, p.66).

In their analysis of globalization—based on Sharon Marcus’ work on the ‘rape script’—Gibson-Graham notes that women workers within the global economy have altered their behavior due to the ever-present fear of capital flight, similar to the way in which women in society alter their behavior due to the fear of being raped (1996, p.122). As they explain:

when [Marcus] made reference to the ways in which women limit their activities—for example, avoiding or thinking twice about being out in public spaces alone or in the evening, for fear of being accused of “asking for” rape—my mind turned to the way in which workers have limited their demands for higher wages and improved working conditions, given the knowledge about capital mobility and the operations of the MNC, for fear that they might be “asking for” capital abandonment (Gibson-Graham 1996, p.122).

Viewing women’s situatedness within the global economy in this way allows for one to more clearly see the ways in which overt resistance has become a less viable—or perceivably less viable—option for some women workers. In a context of constant, and real fear of losing their jobs, some women workers are less likely to openly protest undesirable, even potentially dangerous working conditions, or to demand wage increases. This is because, as Hale asserts, ‘local resistance is constantly undermined as long as

companies remain free to restructure production and roam the planet in search of the highest profit' (1996, p.10).

Gibson-Graham take as their main project 'querying' depictions of globalization as all-encompassing and unchallengeable—of which 'the script of "capital flight"' is a prime example—as such depictions serve to dissuade people from responding or resisting globalization in ways that may seem 'quixotic and unrealistic' (1996, p. 121-145). They argue that by problematizing such depictions of globalization it allows for "alternative scriptings" to become possible (Gibson-Graham 1996, p.147). Yet, capital flight still presents a very real obstacle to women workers being able to undertake open and collective forms of resistance (McFarland 2002, p.70; Maitra and Siddiqui 2005). As one interviewee asserted, "there was *never* a union presence, ever. I believe that would've been grounds for moving the company to the States." (Interview, Ben, 2014, emphasis in interview). He continued, noting that, 'most of the workforce [at the call center] was a lot younger, so younger people don't know their rights. The older people they know too well what their rights are, but they're not going to rock the boat' (Interview, Ben, 2014).

Gabrielle similarly remarked that, '[...] at call centers people tend to be lower class, younger age, or new immigrants. People don't always know their rights and they don't always know the organization. And this isn't all call centers, these are just the ones I went

to and, was a part of, probably because I am poor and young, and you know, those are the places I was working. But people didn't often know the active roles of resistance, and how to do it...' (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014). Therefore, while it is imperative to problematize depictions of globalization as all encompassing, as Gibson-Graham contend, it is still necessary to recognize and acknowledge the very real limitations and restrictions that structure the forms of resistance which workers undertake in the global economy. As I discuss in greater detail in the next chapter, workers have found ways of negotiating and maneuvering within the restrictive environment of the transnationally situated workplace to resist—primarily through the use of everyday forms of resistance. And although these acts of resistance are not typically open, or necessarily collective, they do present the potential to have larger implications for the processes of global capitalism. Thus, while the workers are subject to certain material restrictions (i.e. the threat of capital flight) the very fact that they do resist suggests that they have begun, as Gibson-Graham describe, to 'den[y] the inevitability and "reality" of MNC power over workers' and have begun 'exploring ways in which the hard and penetrating body of the MNC can be seen as soft, fragile, and vulnerable' (1996, p.146).

In addition to the role that the threat of 'capital flight' plays in potentially deterring workers from resisting in overt ways, the high rate of worker turnover—also referred to

as ‘churn’ (Bain and Taylor 2000, p.11)—experienced in many transnationally situated workplaces, especially call centers (McFarland 2002, p.66; Mulholland 2004, p.722; Buchanan 2002, p.64), also works against the possibility of collective organization. Also, as Huws posits, ‘the diversity of this workforce, its transience, and the relative newness of this kind of work suggest that no coherent collective occupational identity has yet emerged,’ which has further worked against efforts to unionize call center workers (2009, p.3).¹⁴³ Further, John noted that even the spatial and temporal¹⁴⁴ structure of the call center workplace worked against the possibility of workers collectively organizing. As he states,

...interestingly, it wasn’t like we started at 6 am, and everyone got off at, like whatever, 2 or 4, and then another whole block came in, they kind of staggered it up. So somebody would start at 5:30, I’d start at 6:15, the next person would start at 6:40, or something like that. So, I think, just thinking now, right now, *that seems like it was intentional as well*. [...] Yeah, [I think that was a strategic move] to keep us from organizing. Yeah. And, and we would take our breaks all at different times, too [...] Thinking back, *it separates us*, right. [...] We sat maybe across from...or, like down the line from each other, ‘cause it’d be like, cubicles here facing that way, and cubicles here facing this way, like, these are

¹⁴³ Layla’s response to the question of whether or not there had been any move on the part of employees to collectively organize within her call center suggests that there might be a connection between the age of workers, and the potential for such action. As she states, ‘No. They were mainly young [...] the people that I hung out with were young people, so, everyone was just there to...my, the group of coworkers that I would hang out with, were just, trying to, you know, help with tuition, things like that. So, nothing as long term’ (Interview, Layla, 2014). Here, the development of a ‘collective occupational identity’ (Huw’s 2009, p.3) is undermined by the fact that many call center workers are students looking only to make enough money to assist with the cost of higher education, and are not interested in, as Layla suggests, the ‘long term’ (Interview, 2014).

¹⁴⁴ John used the language of being ‘temporally monitored’ during his interview (Interview, 2014). Also, Sarah explicitly discussed the problematic aspects of the way that her call center was ‘spatially organized’ (Interview, 2014). Here, I adopt their language for talking about the call center workplace environment.

our seats, these are our seats, and there's that long bar in the middle. And it was like above eye level where the, ah, thing was so you couldn't just like look over at a guy, right. And if you stood up, like you could stand up and stretch your feet, but if you, like didn't have your headset on, or you [inaudible] just went over and talked to somebody, they'd get on you. Talking to somebody during, like, your time there was highly, like, frowned upon. So, *I feel like, that was another way that they, like, instilled in us, not to talk while we're at work*, or whatever. [It was] insidious. (Interview, John, 2014, emphasis added).¹⁴⁵

Sarah also remarked on the ways that both the physical lay out, as well as the work schedule, in the call center where she was employed worked against workers' ability to collectively organize. As she explains,

...in the case of the call center, I think that's [collective organization or unionization] [inaudible] extremely difficult, especially in the way this...this call center was spatially organized. I mean, your contract is different from other contracts, the shifts are all different, so, it's not like you have the whole building working on one shift. Some shifts are overlapping, you have full timers and part timers, you have, you know, people with shift premiums that are looked at differently than people that are making the minimum wage, and then you have all of these pressures that are making it very difficult to even have collective conversations. Right, I mean, break time is organized for you, so you don't go on breaks with everyone, you go on break when it shows up on your computer that it's time for you to go on break, or when you finish a call. [...] I think that any way these workplaces are going to be organized, it has to be through, sort of,

¹⁴⁵ Sarah also expressed a very similar concern over the organization of work at the call center where she worked, and the impact that it had preventing workers for organizing. As she sates, 'I mean, you have 3000 miserable workers in a building, how do you make them *not* organize? I mean, this is where the politics of ergonomics come in. This is where, you know, you design a layout so that workers don't look at each other but are back to back, right, where you have cubicles around each worker so they don't even really know that they're there working with anybody else. The headphones that go into your ears so you can't hear anything other than what is on that phone call coming out of your phone. Like, it makes you feel really isolated as a...when you're...as a worker working in one of these places, because you just feel like the ant going in and out, in the hole, out the hole, in the hole, out the hole, right, sit down at your desk and stare at your computer screen and maybe at break you might talk to somebody, but everybody's concerned about finishing their food and getting back to...getting back to work. Right, and so there's really not a lot of time to have meaningful conversations with these people (Interview, Sarah, 2014, emphasis in interview). Gabrielle also discussed the strategic configuration of call center workplaces, and in particular, the strategic placement of workers on the floor (Interview, 2014).

community organized, or collective events that happen outside with the same workers. Right, so it would have to be, like, I don't know, a softball day or something where, where the workers get together and play or do something and are able to have a safe space to be able to talk about their...their...you know, what it is that's troubling them and then maybe, and then those conversations always lead to [asking questions like] "what do we do about it?" Right, but *I think that in the way that the plants are actually spatially organized, and the way that work is organized, it makes it very difficult for people to actually organize some sort of resistance, and so, I guess, it ends up being that individual call center employees make individual acts of, of everyday sorts of, you know, actions, against either their boss, or a customer.* Right, but I don't know that that's, I mean, I don't know, I wouldn't say that it's not, productive, 'cause I don't think it's very fair to judge a worker in that position, 'cause I've been there, but, I mean, it could be...it would be much better if there, if there was ways that, that call center workers could find collective forms of doing those little bits of resistance. I think it would be much stronger and might...would might actually change the way that a lot of those call centers run (Interview, Sarah, 2014, emphasis added).

However, this is not to suggest that unionization and union participation within the call center industry is entirely impossible. In fact, several of the studies that have been conducted on the call center industry have been undertaken in economic climates where unions are either present or possible (e.g. Bain and Taylor 2000, p.6; McFarland 2002, p.69; Mulholland 2004, p.712; Guard et. al 2002, p.280; Cavaignac 2013)—albeit the actions and effectiveness of such unions are usually highly restricted in many ways (McFarland 2002, p.69). Although Guard et al. (2006, p.280) offer a more optimistic portrayal of the potential for workers within this 'hard-to-organize' industry.¹⁴⁶ In their

¹⁴⁶ As Stevens notes, 'knowledge workers certainly have a long and rich tradition of union activity, as the existence of the media, print, engineering, and health sector unions indicate (McKercher 2002; Mosco and McKercher 2008; Lipset, Trow, and Coleman 1956; Strauss 1964). Workers affiliated with IT firms and business services, however, are mostly underrepresented. Only about 5 percent of workers in Canada's business support

study the authors documented the successful organizing campaign undertaken by the United Steel Workers (USW) to unionize call center workers within Omega District Response in Sudbury, Ontario, beginning in 1999 (Guard et al. 2006, p.280). Further, in her study of call center workers in New Brunswick, McFarland described efforts (both successful and unsuccessful) on the part of the Teamsters' Union to organize workers within the industry (2002, pp.65-68). However, such cases remain exceptions, rather than the norm within the industry as whole. Attempts at unionization, and union participation on the part of call center workers, are still by and large highly restricted (McFarland 2002, pp.68-69). John noted that unionization and collective organization were suppressed at the call center where he was employed. As he recalls,

...they actively suppressed the union. There was [sic] attempts right before I started working there [...] I believe somebody put up a...like some flyers around the call center, or left them on the people's desks to unionize and organize. But the people behind it all got fired. Like, it was like hardcore like Wal-Mart suppression. Like, it was that, like. And they put, they put the cameras in the...facing the parking lot to make sure people didn't organize, or whatever. And there was a...there was cameras everywhere, actually in that place. And...but the ceiling was really, really, really high up, it was like a giant warehouse basically, that was just converted to a call center. [...] And I could see up in the rafters like the cameras pointing down at us, so, it was really creepy, because you're being watched by like...your [supervisors] listening [to your calls], and also visually, from above. And so they actively suppressed like unions in the call center. And they, I believe they let us know about it [...] I don't think they needed to [make any explicit statements about this]. I think it just got...it was known and it was spoken about. So, I don't think they needed to do the, ah, top down approach. I think they just put the word out amongst the masses... (Interview, John, 2014).¹⁴⁷

services are unionized, seven times lower than the service sector as a whole, according to the most recent figures (Akeyeampong 2005)' (2014, p.20).

¹⁴⁷ When asked whether he recalled any of his coworkers discussing the potential of collectively organizing while he was employed there, he responded that, 'Yeah, that

While there was not any move to collectively organize or unionize at one the call centers where she worked, Gabrielle did recall a time when she, along with some of her other coworkers, did confront their workplace superiors about unfair company policies toward workers. As she explains,

[this call center] should've had a union, but I don't think there was. [...] At [this call center] we all got together because he [supervisor] was trying to dock our pay for anytime that you were late, or, including to him, being late was your computer taking time to boot up, so he wanted you there twenty minutes early to boot your computer up, so you can be on call the moment your shift starts. Which is totally illegal, and he...he had started intimidating and docking pay, and like, some people weren't making progress in their training, as he wanted, so he was making them work extra hours for free, and like, all sorts of stuff. So, a bunch of us basically had gotten together and said "you can't do that." Like, we were at a staff meeting and he was giving us...reaming us out and then I was just like "you can't do that," and then a whole bunch of other people was like "oh, well then we're not

would be me. Yeah, I was, because that was when I was in my early 20s, and I was a lot more bombastic back then. And my sister was like highly political, like, borderline like Marxist, kind of left. And [...] we're both like young, young and stupid, or whatever, right. But yeah, [the call center where I worked] would have been like the perfect place to organize [...] We would talk about it in hushed tones in the lunchroom, or whatever, and the smoke pit. But not...there was no serious, not when I was there, was there any serious like organizing activities. And the people who wanted to organize were basically the call center employees that were at my level, and doing my type of job. Like the, the customer service people. But the sales people didn't give a shit about organizing because they worked off commission. And then the higher up guys, like my friend, he also made a lot of his money off of commission as well, and he didn't want to like organize because he was basically management, even though he was still doing customer service, but it was such a specialized type that he was like a highly valuable employee, or whatever, in some regards. So if anybody wanted to collectivize, it would be like, like 40 percent of the call center...less than, probably like 30, would even want to. And then of that 30 percent, I'd say like half of us actually wanted to, the other half were like I said, the middle aged people who have like a family to support, and they're not going to risk losing their job. So it was really...and then we were like young 20 something guys, it's like, we're not making this call center our career. So, it quickly just falls apart. It's like, man, I'm just doing this for a short time, I don't give a shit, really [...] It was also an era of like, like hard against unions, like in the early 2000s, was like anti-union in [the province where I worked]. So, that has to be noted as well, it was in the climate' (Interview, John, 2014).

cool with that” and then that kind of started the talk of like “we’re down with this stuff” and then eventually he was kind of, like, checked into it and realized that I’m right, that is illegal, and he could lose his job, but it didn’t mean that the intimidation and threatening, or anything, that all continued. But, it just, the lines he used to achieve it changed. [...] [After this happened] I got fired. And then multiple of the people that had come forward also got fired. [...] *Unofficially, off the record, I was told I was fired because I was making people think about questioning authority, followed by the fact that I was distracting the boys because I was attractive.* [...] I was not supposed to know this, but I was friends with a lot of people and they told me because they were there when he said it. [...] [The official reason given for being fired was] that I was using my cellphone on the floor, which I used once because my grandma went in a coma. [...] [Other people at the call center had broken this rule] many, many times. Yeah. So it was basically, they were trying to get me out and they needed anything they could (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014, emphasis added).¹⁴⁸

However, as Gabrielle outlines, those involved in overtly pushing back against management’s policies, were fired as a result—although, other, (in Gabrielle’s case) equally problematic reasons were provided for them being dismissed. Gabrielle’s comments to underscore the reality that overt resistance within call center—while not impossible—is extremely limited in most cases, and can cost workers their jobs.

And, interestingly, while as Huws (2009, p.3) asserts, the lack of collective work identity resulting from a high degree of turnover within the industry potentially works against the

¹⁴⁸ Gabrielle touched on the supposed issue of her ‘distracting the boys’ again when I asked her about to what degree workers were monitored at the call centers where she had worked. She replied that, ‘*at [this call center] the manager was monitoring our personal emails. Which is totally not okay. Which is one of the reasons why my distracting the boys came up because apparently my name came up a lot in emails and the boys were apparently interested in me, and this was a problem for him because then they were spending time sending emails back and forth. Which isn’t my fault*’ (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014, emphasis added).

collective organization of workers, it seems to actually support the use of everyday tactics.

As Gabrielle explains, while outlining what the concept worker resistance means to her

(both in general, as well as specially within the call center setting):

G: It means two things to me. It means the informal things you do every day to undermine companies that are taking advantage of you, and then it means people trying to collectively change the system. Ironically, the first thing I think about is a whole bunch of people from Shoppers [Drugmart] who were laid off for starting a union. Or people from Wal-Mart who were all fired for starting a union. We never started a union, but our similar acts also got all of us fired. So that certainly happened. *In a call center context, I think it is what managers call laziness, which just means taking extra time to do everything, you know.*¹⁴⁹

SR: So, you think those informal practices, management is, to a degree, aware of them?

G: *Oh, they're highly aware of it. They are highly aware and they try to cut it out at every turn, but then they eventually just lose people and the new people who come in figure it out too. So, I mean, they, they never win the battle, but they try to.*

SR: So there's sort of...they try counter measures, but are only so effective?

G: Well, we're human beings. We're not robots, you know. You can only handle so many calls back to back to back to back to back, and you know, it's, it's just mentally exhausting, especially if...I mean it's not so bad if you have a script, but if you have to like look into someone's account, look through all their details, figure out their local service providers, go through all that stuff, or like I've worked for banks, on telebanking, and stuff, I mean you actually have to go through everything in their account and there are like seventeen different screens, you know. Like, it's just not possible to stay on top of everything at the rate they want you to, you know.

SR: So do you think with these informal actions, or 'laziness,' as, you know, management would call it, do you think when workers were doing this, that they knew there was a certain risk to doing those actions, or undertaking those actions?

G: Most people didn't care. *Some people were very concerned about their jobs.* Those people were usually more older people that were hired on. In [one of the call centers where I worked], *in most cases, it was people who had just*

¹⁴⁹ Although, at different points in the interview, Gabrielle did note that there was a mix of open and hidden forms of resistance within the call centers where she was employed, but that the majority of these actions were more 'informal' (Interview, 2014).

immigrated to Canada and desperately needed the job. The rest of us cared to a degree. And then a few of us didn't care at all. So, it was kind of that situation... 'cause I mean you could do so much without getting in trouble because everyone was doing it. And...and that was helpful because, you know, we are all human and all need a break sometimes. So that was helpful. I think it's also that it's not as if you're losing a valued job. You know, at the end of the day, there are a million call centers that are constantly losing people because it's hard work to do, and, you know, if you lose [your] job at this one, you can just walk over to the next one, you know. It's not like you're losing a job that you really like to do, or that's going to really help your career, or that's in any way personally advantageous for you, other than paying the bills.

SR: So, yourself included, and other workers, you had the sense that there was a line of what you could and could not do in terms of knowing that there would be a risk to, maybe, your employment if you went past that, that line, or that boundary?

G: There wasn't a line. There was...they didn't want you to do any of it and as long as you weren't the worst one down the line you were fine because, you know, if you're the worst one down the line you're the first to get fired and then the rest of us will know that's a line too far (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014, emphasis added).

Here, Gabrielle both highlights, as noted, the degree to which frequent turnover can serve to aid in the perpetuation of everyday forms of resistance, and also her comments serve to explicitly highlight the ways that worker resistance within call centers differs from resistance within other service industries. Also, her comments lend further support to the argument that there are different opportunity structures of resistance within the industry, for different groups of workers. And finally, her remarks also serve to highlight the collective nature of individualized forms of resistance that Scott had earlier documented (Scott 1989, p.35).

Even where unionization, or union participation exist as potentially viable outlets for women workers to express grievances, they are still limited in the effects they can have; both in terms of what they can obtain in collective agreements (Mulholland 2004, p.713), as well as in the tendency for unions to be male-dominated, leading to the issues which are important to women workers being largely overlooked (Nagar et. al 2002, p.264, Hale 1996, p.10; Kalm 2001, p.250; Mills 2003, p.52; Reyes 2007, p.229). As Mills explains, ‘globally labor union leadership remains predominantly male; when women do organize their efforts are often perceived as supplementary, subordinate, or constrained by prior domestic responsibilities’ (2003, p.52).¹⁵⁰ Further, as Hale asserts, women’s interests have been overlooked by many of the ‘international institutions managing the global economy, such as IMF, World Bank, and WTO, but also in those organizations campaigning for the rights of workers such as the ILO, NGOs and international trade union networks’ (Hale 1996, p.13).¹⁵¹ Therefore, even when women workers are in

¹⁵⁰ However even in cases where women workers play an active role within unions, as is the case with the Communication Workers Union discussed by Mulholland (2004, p.712), acts of ‘everyday’ resistance are still very much present within the call center workplace.

¹⁵¹ Hale aptly asserts that ‘any discussion is taking place in high level forums where most of the participants are men and where women’s views are unrepresented. Workers are referred to in a gender-neutral way so that it is not seen to matter whether they are represented by men or women. *Yet women do not have the same experience of work as men*’ (1996, p.13, emphasis added). This has also often been the case in scholarly discussions of worker resistance, which has led to a lack of attention being paid to the ways in which worker resistance is gendered. Hale’s work begins to investigate the connection between gendered differences in employment and resistance strategies (Hale 1996, p.13). However, even here Hale could have pushed the point further by focusing directly on the gendered division of labour and its effects on resistance.

position to be able to unionize, or participate in unions, they may find it more effective to pursue their grievances through other alternative avenues of resistance.

Even everyday forms of resistance are potentially undermined by management within the workplace. Call center companies use various everyday tactics to try and secure the loyalty and hard work of employees (and, also, presumably, to quell their desire to resist).¹⁵² Common strategies within the industry include providing workers with free food at work on occasions,¹⁵³ as well as playing performance-based games, aimed at

¹⁵² John noted that his employers tried to cultivate a sense of family among employees. As he explains, ‘as your numbers don’t bear out, they [your employers] become more and more, like, mean, or whatever. They, like at the beginning, they, they cast themselves as this big happy family, but in reality, it’s like, I don’t know, it’s just very oppressive’ (Interview, 2014). Further, when asked what—if anything—his employers did to stress that they cared about their employees, John noted that ‘Oh yeah, totally. [...] [They stressed] that we’re a family. We like to do things together. When you’re here it’s not supposed to be...like we have a job to do, but let’s, let’s keep that happy tone in our voice. Like, that sort of thing. So it was like they’re trying to construct, like, community. But people would just drop out all the time, and they...it would be weird because they would just not show up again, it was like they were being murdered or something, or kidnapped. Like [they are] your fellow employees and there would be no, like, comment on it. It’s like they just wouldn’t be there anymore, and you would talk about it in the lunchroom or something, but it wouldn’t be like a, an announcement, like, “we lost Barry today.” So, it was weird. It was kind of hypocritical’ (Interview, 2014).

¹⁵³ Anna noted that food was regularly used in her call center as a way for the employers to show appreciation for their employees, and to demonstrate that they cared about them. As she explains, ‘Well they did have like, I don’t know, every, like every, I think it was every week, they would have like different like themed things. So like, just say it was a holiday, then they would have, like, a, kind of, not like a barbeque, but like a meal for us, and there would be employee appreciation day like every month, and like just to point out like people that had good customer service. So like if someone called like back and said “oh, this person is so great at their, at their job” then they would like point that out, and I don’t know, like they did little things, like I don’t know how to explain it. [...] Yeah. Lots of food actually. The Greek day...and that was just in the short time that I was there,

boosting productivity.¹⁵⁴ Also call center employers regularly reward workers with prizes for getting high sales numbers, or generally good performance on the job.¹⁵⁵ For example, as Martin noted, ‘[the call center where I was employed] have a system to give certain bonuses for workers who are above the average. They give them some money [inaudible] to keep the same, the same pace. The average call [...] when I was there was six minutes, so, you had to have an average of six minutes, or less, to be considered a good, a good worker’ (Interview, 2014). When asked whether or not he viewed this program in a

so like two and a half, three months. I ate a lot of food (Interview, Anna, 2014, emphasis in interview). Layla noted similar food-based events at a financial corporation’s call center where she was employed, including monthly wine and cheeses, as well as providing pizza to employees (Interview, 2014). Patricia, John, and Sarah noted similar events at the separate call centers where they were employed as well (Interviews, 2014).¹⁵⁴ For example, as John recalls, ‘And a lot of stuff was just obvious. Like, obvious motivational tactics. Stupid motivational quotes up on the wall. Dumb, I remember this thing...Survivor [the television show] had just started, as well, so they did call center Survivor, and it was like this whole theme thing, that I just willfully did not participate in. I just, I don’t go for shit like that, right. I wasn’t, I was the worst possible candidate to work in a call center, I think at some times. Like I don’t like sittin’ in one place, I don’t like the same task all the time. So, but, like I said, some people, for whatever reason, thrived under that, and they were the ones who became like, you know team leads, or whatever’ (Interview, 2014).

¹⁵⁵ For example, Samuel (Interview, 2014) noted that workers at this call center had the opportunity to win prizes such as a \$100.00 Wal-Mart gift card, or movie tickets, if they met certain call targets. Anna similarly noted that high sales in her call center were rewarded with prizes like Keg gift certificates, or even, in some cases, trips (Interview, 2014). Also, Jeremy noted that, based on workers’ productivity rankings, they could potentially get a bonus on their salary (Interview, 2014). Layla recalled that employees at one of the call centers where she worked would be rewarded on the basis of sales numbers with prizes such as \$10.00 gas gift cards (Interview, 2014). Patricia recalled that while teams could be rewarded for sales with prizes, such as trips, if employees made under a certain level of sales they would be fired at the financial services call center where she was employed (Interview, 2014).

positive or negative light (and whether or not he felt his employers made an effort to make him feel valued), he responded that,

well it is difficult to say. If you are a person who is making minimum wage, of course fifty bucks makes it positive for you, [it] makes [...] a difference. *But [...] from the perspective of the company, I think is to, to make employees loyal. I think that's the idea. To, to make them, the workers, think the way the company wants them to think.* So, if you have to get a good average, you rush with your calls you have to do everything quickly. So, you tell your customers, you say "okay, I'm sorry sir, but I, I just want to help you, can you tell me this information, so I can finish with this," so you don't, you try to avoid being, I don't know, you avoid certain conversations with the, with the, with the customers. *You become just a machine [...]* I really think that there's no...there's no truly way of showing that the workers are valuable there. It was really [...] false, the way they were rewarding the workers (Interview, Martin, 2014, emphasis added).

Given the high degree of turnover and resistance present within this setting, the effectiveness of these practices to secure worker loyalty and commitment seems limited. Further, as Koch-Schulte notes, 'time management of surveillance technologies can minimize opportunities for resistance' (2002, p.165).

Even though these more overt avenues of resistance (and in some cases, covert avenues of resistance) have been made more difficult for some workers, it no way means that resistance has been impossible altogether. In fact, alternative spaces for worker resistance have opened up in this new economic climate (Nagar et. al 2002, p.273; Mirchandani 2004, pp.179-180; Hale 1996, p.9; Marchand and Runyan 2000, p.9), ones that have been more 'everyday' in nature (Mills 2003, p.50). This has been especially

true within transnationally situated workforces, where, because of the many factors discussed above, open and collective forms of worker resistance and protest have been restricted—especially within the feminized transnational manufacturing and service industries.¹⁵⁶ I focus on the call center industry as the central site of analysis because the call center industry represents an excellent example of both the feminization of transnationally situated service industries (Bonds 2006, pp.31-33; Lerner 2002, p.147; Buchanan 2002, p.52), as well as the subsequent gendered shift in resistance that has led to workers (who are primarily women) to turn to smaller ‘everyday forms of resistance’ (Mulholland 2004). Thus, the call center industry provides an apt case for potentially highlighting how the feminization of certain industries can subsequently lead to the feminization of the forms of resistance undertaken by the workers within them—one of the central claims presented throughout this dissertation.

As Marchand and Runyan (2000, p.9) argue, the processes and effects of global economic restructuring have led scholars to ‘search for alternative conceptions of resistance which highlight women’s agency not just in large scale economic (labor) movements, but also in

¹⁵⁶ As Pyle and Ward note ‘disproportionate attention [has been paid] to women’s work in export factories [which] has obscured how such labor constitutes only a small proportion of women’s overall work’ (2003, p.471, see also Mills 2003, p.41). In light of this, I shift my focus solely to the transnational service industry instead, which has received considerably less scholarly attention

cultural and political struggles at all levels from the household to the transnational arena’—and, as I will discuss below, at the everyday level of the workspace itself as well. This focus on the ‘everyday’ is echoed by Mirchandani in her study of ‘webs of resistance’ in the Indian call center industry, in which she advocates for an increased attention to the ‘micro-politics of resistance’ that men and women undertake (2004, p.179). Mirchandani also importantly argues that when analyzing these ‘micro-politics of resistance’ scholars must be attentive to the ways in which ‘structures, institutions and power relations’ serve to shape these actions (2004, p.179). Following from the insights provided by Hart (1991), Camp (2004), Smyth and Grijns (1997), and Koch-Schulte (2001), I argue that understanding the everyday acts of resistance that are undertaken by workers within the call center industry requires examining these acts within the context of the global gendered division of labor,¹⁵⁷ in order to demonstrate how forms of worker resistance are gendered as a result.

In doing so, I aim to challenge traditional ideas and understandings of the nature and character of worker resistance, in an effort to highlight what opportunities for resistance actually look like within the current global political economy. By employing a feminist

¹⁵⁷ In addition to considering worker behaviour within the call center within the context of the global gendered division of labour, it is also important, as Huws (2009) asserts, to consider how local factors influence and shape the call center workplace (and therefore, workers’ everyday experiences and actions).

lens it is my goal to broaden the scope of worker actions and behaviors that are currently considered and understood as acts of resistance. In particular, through the use of the FEPGE approach (outlined earlier in chapter two) I want to explore the broader significance of these acts of resistance from a gendered perspective, and to examine the larger potential implications that these acts may have for the global political economy. I strongly contend that by highlighting the ways in which worker resistance is gendered (and the potential consequences of these actions) it demonstrates that both gender and the ‘everyday’ should serve as central analytical considerations for IPE, as doing so allows for a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the global political economy to become visible.

‘...the creative ways you’re able to resist increase as you’re there longer and you learn the tricks. It’s like you’re learning the system as well as learning the customer service system at the same time. [...] when you start as a customer service person, it seems so oppressive and big and complicated that you’ll never understand. So, it’s like this dual process of [learning], like, you can resist by understanding the system better.’

-John, Interview, 2014 (emphasis added).

‘How the world economy is played out at the everyday level of ordinary people, and how such people might even impact the world economy is a lacuna that everyday political economists seek to fill. EIPE also seeks, albeit to varying degrees, to bring into focus how the actions of everyday actors are important vehicles for issuing change in the world economy.’

- John M. Hobson and Leonard Seabrooke, 2010, p.290.

Chapter Five: Gender and Everyday Resistance in the Transnational Call Center Workplace

Worker resistance in the call center context can be motivated by—and potentially restricted by—various factors, which include but are not limited to, the high degree of control and monitoring that workers are subject to daily while in the workplace (Bonds 2006; Russell 2009; Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000; Van Jaarsveld et al. 2007; Barnes 2004)¹⁵⁸, unfair and unjust treatment by supervisors or management (Mulholland 2002;

¹⁵⁸ While the monitoring of telephone calls within call centers—both in real time, as well as, in many cases, through the review of recorded calls—is commonplace (and employees are usually aware of this), the degree to which computer screens are also monitored varies. However, as one participant noted, there are ways that you can tell exactly when your screen is being monitored. As she explains, ‘there was no way to stop it but at...like random time[s] you could tell that they were monitoring your screen because the mouse would move and you’re not touching it’ (Interview, Patricia, 2014). Sarah reported hearing from her coworkers that there were similar clues to when calls were being monitored, including hearing ‘static’ or a ‘buzzing’ noise on the telephone line while talking to a customer, and also, on some days, she noted that managers would tell the

2004), negative interactions with customers (Mullen and Kelloway 2013), as well as unjust company policies. In particular, as Martin explains, the constant control exerted by call center employers is particularly problematic and serves to undermine worker resistance (even that of a more everyday nature). When asked about the surveillance and monitoring at the call center where he was employed (and whether there was any way to circumvent these controls) he responded

[...] If there is a way to compare a factory to, to a call center it's in fact this, this aspect, the way in which the company controls time.¹⁵⁹ [...] I think that a call center is another extension of how capitalist organization of work controls time for workers. As I told you, once you log in, in your computer and on your, your telephone, every single second you spend inside the building is controlled. [...] I think this is very alienating. Very alienating, because you, feel that you are a machine, even though you are not. [...] Currently I am working at a warehouse. And in the warehouse, of course they are also controlling your time and your pace, and you have [...] to be around the average. But you always have more or less [a] certain margin which you can spend your time and relax a little bit. At [the call center] I have never felt that way. I have never felt that way, I felt all the time really pressured. It was, I used to feel really, really pressured. I prefer the work I have now for many reasons, also because I feel much better. I never felt that sensation of being so pressured and being like in a jail (Interview, Martin, 2014).

Another participant, John, likened the experience of working in a call center to George Orwell's novel *1984*. As he stated,

employees that they would be listening to calls (Interview, 2014). Interestingly, John noted that it was clear from the very start that, as a call center employee you should expect to be monitored. As he recalls, 'we did it [our training] all at a computer. And we had like headsets where we listened to previously recorded calls, which has that nice double purpose of telling you that yes we do listen, and yes we do really listen' (Interview, 2014).

¹⁵⁹ Sarah also discussed call center work in relation to factory work, asserting that, '...it was also extremely boring and extremely stressful. So, I mean, at the end of the day, I'd prefer factory work to call center work' (Interview, 2014).

I happened to have read like *1984*, maybe a year or two before I started there. And, yeah, I just, that was like the perfect example there. It was really creepy. It was huge, you're nameless [...] you felt like you were being watched and monitored always. Everything was broken down on time, down to the second, I think fifteen second intervals, actually, and you would get reprimanded if you didn't meet your, like call time average, or, like, just stupid shit like that (Interview, John, 2014).

Collective organization within the call center industry, in particular, is undermined by several factors, as noted in the previous section, including the threat of capital flight (McFarland 2009b; Batt et al. 2009), lack of a unified occupational identity (Huws 2009), high turnover (Van Jaarsveld et al. 2007; Batt et al. 2009), and other restrictions on unionization (McFarland 2009b; Van Jaarsveld et al. 2007; Buchanan 2002).¹⁶⁰ Given this, I argue that along with a 'feminization of labour' (Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000, pp.3-4) that has occurred within the transnational call center industry (Belt et al. 2002), we also need to acknowledge a feminization of worker resistance practices (Ustubici 2009); with workers—a disproportionate number of which are women—relying heavily on everyday resistance practices to express their discontent (Buchanan 2002). Again, both men and women can undertake feminized forms of resistance, but there are some forms of feminized resistance that can be seen as distinctly gendered given the unique positionalities of women workers.

¹⁶⁰ Although, this is not to say that some participants were completely pessimistic about the ability of call center workers to organize. For example, Martin asserted that, 'if [...] McDonald's workers are striking recently, I think that people who work at retail or call centers can also unionize and [...] try to get the conditions' (Interview, 2014).

There is an emerging literature that is devoted to examining the nature and character of resistance within the call center industry (Bonds 2006 p.36, fn. 6; Russell 2009; pp.235-270; Koch-Schulte 2001; Barnes 2004; Mulholland 2004). As Barnes explains, ‘early work on call centres by Fernie and Metcalfe (1998: 8) drew on Foucault’s panopticon to throw light on working conditions in call centres. The failure of the panopticon metaphor to recognise employee capacity for resistance is well established in call centre literature (Taylor & Bain 1999; Bain and Taylor 2000; Callaghan & Thompson 2001)’ (2004, p.127). In fact, many studies since have focused in some way on the forms of resistance that are used by workers within this industry, in varying contexts. Perhaps one of the most comprehensive, in terms of its focus on the ‘everyday’ nature of resistance within the industry is Mulholland’s (2004) study of Irish call center workers. In the study, Mulholland documents several types of ‘everyday’ worker resistance, such as ‘slammin’’, ‘scammin’’, ‘smokin’’, and ‘leavin’’, (2004, p.709). Mulholland uses these terms to denote and classify various forms of ‘everyday resistance,’ which include such acts as falsely reporting sales that were never made; continuing to talk on the phone after a sales call had been completed (see also Bain and Taylor 2000, p.12); withdrawing emotional labour; calling in sick or leaving before a worker’s shift had ended; taking smoke breaks (an act that even those who did not smoke took part in); or simply leaving the job

altogether by quitting (Mulholland 2004, p. 709-720). These acts bear a striking resemblance to the forms of resistance discussed by Scott in his accounts of the Malaysian peasantry, although Mulholland does not explicitly draw on his work in conducting her analysis.¹⁶¹

The first set of actions discussed by Mulholland— ‘slammin’ and ‘scammin’—are homologous to the acts of ‘dissimulation’ that Scott had witnessed (1985, p.284). Scott observed that the Malaysian peasantry would often perform in public in ways that kept ‘with the expectations of the powerholder,’ while actually resisting in covert, or hidden ways. The last act—‘leavin’—similarly bears a striking resemblance to forms of resistance in Scott’s study. As Scott explains, rural Malaysians have ‘classically voted with [their] feet...it would not be an exaggeration to say that ‘exit’ rather than ‘voice’

¹⁶¹ Interestingly, in all the examples of everyday resistance discussed by Mulholland workers relied on what Scott termed a ‘venerable popular culture of resistance’ (1989, p.35). Scott had noted that while everyday acts of resistance occurred at an individual level, without the requirement of coordination of other individuals, they relied on a culture of resistance in order to keep their actions hidden from the dominant (1989, p.35); which points to the paradoxically collective nature of what Scott conceived of as individual resistance. Russell also offers a similar discussion of how ‘individual acts of non-compliance with managerial dictates may have a collective component’ (2009 p.242). Burawoy similarly documented that operators and supervisors would either ‘assist’ or ‘connive’ together in acts of ‘quota restriction’ in order to further the game of ‘making out’ (1979, p.58). Although, as Burawoy suggests these acts were allowed by management, in so far as they did not threaten profits, and therefore could not really be seen as a challenge to the actual capitalist system of production (1979, p.58; 80-81; 199).

had come to characterize the traditional and preferred response to oppression in Malay society' (Scott 1985, p.245).

Given the valuable insights that Scott's work on everyday resistance obviously offers, it is understandable that Koch-Schulte (2002) takes his work as her starting point—along with the work of postmodern theorists such as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler—in analyzing forms of worker resistance evidenced within Canadian call centers.¹⁶² As she notes, in her study, 'narratives of individual acts of resistance are used to provide an understanding of how individuals cope with difficult working conditions and how these acts may help change their conditions and the workers themselves' (Koch-Schulte 2002, p.152).¹⁶³ In particular, Koch-Schulte outlines five types of worker resistance evidenced within her study: 'grumbling and complaining; missed work and quitting; "unprofessional" bodily appearances; joining or organizing unions; and re-managed technology' (2002, p.157). Similar forms of resistance were also documented within Barnes' (2004) in-depth study of the relationships between accommodation and resistance within three Australian call centers.¹⁶⁴ With my research, I found significant overlap with several of Koch-Schulte's (and Barnes') findings, in terms of the forms of resistance relied on by call

¹⁶² As Koch-Schulte notes in this piece, 'data used in my analysis originated with a policy study undertaken for Status of Women Canada (Buchanan and Koch-Schulte, 2000). The objective of the Government of Canada study was to develop narratives of workers' issues in the telemarketing sector, particularly in the area of gender' (2002, p.152).

¹⁶³ Importantly, Koch-Schulte also asserts that 'in this chapter, instances of resistance are generally understood as mainstream worker practices, not anomalies or exceptions' (2002, p.155).

¹⁶⁴ Although, here it should be noted that some forms of worker action that I have identified and consider as resistance Barnes labels as 'accommodation' (in particular, the 'formation of supportive work cultures') (2004, p.128).

center workers (which I will discuss in greater detail in the following sections), but also on other issues as well. For example, similar to Koch-Schulte's study, the issue of workers' clothing and appearance came up during more than one of my interviews.

As Koch-Schulte states, 'what is the most desirable appearance in a call center? It was generally reported that a tie and collar for men are standard. No tattoos should be visible. Piercing should only be detectable for women, in the ears, except for traditional "ethnic" wearers. Hair should be a natural looking colour, and worn short by men. Even in call centres' highly restrictive work environment, I found the enforcement of dress codes to be startling, especially since workers are invisible to their clients' (2002, p.160). In the examples discussed by Koch-Schulte, dress codes seemed disproportionately aimed at male workers' appearance. However, in the instances when this issue came up during the interviews for my study, it was women who noted being unfairly targeted by such policies—often for highly gendered reasons.

Here, again, the issue of workplace attire is unquestionably gendered. As one of the women I interviewed explains, she experienced more than one problematic interaction with management due to the clothing that she chose to wear to work. As she recounts:

M: One time I got called into the office for the way that I dressed.

SR: So what did they say to you exactly, or paraphrasing?

M: They said I should wear less tight clothing.

SR: How did you respond to that?

M: I was really embarrassed. I was really embarrassed because I thought, I didn't think there was anything wrong with the way that I dressed. I was really

embarrassed. And then, that was during the summer, and then it became winter in [city where call center was located] I was wearing several layers of clothes to get to work and then when I got to work inside at my cubicle I would take some layers off and I remember one time taking off some pants, and I was late so I couldn't go into the bathroom and do it, I was doing it right before, like plugging in, or as I was, no I wasn't plugged in yet, but it was like two minutes to the time that I was supposed to do it and I remember there was like, you know, a big uproar, or something like that because I was taking off pants and I had clothes underneath it, but yeah, just because I was taking off my outside pants, my snow pants [SR: wow]. Yeah.

SR: What do you...why do you think that your supervisor or management made such a big deal about the way that you were dressing?

M: *Because they were looking.*

SR: Did they ever phrase it [...] to you in that way, or is that what you inferred from the situation based on how they were acting?

M: That, that's my hindsight. Yeah. They said that it's not appropriate basically.

SR: Did you change, like, granted winter came, and you had to dress differently, but after they said that did you make a conscience effort to change the way that you were dressing?

M: Yeah, of course. Yeah.

(Interview, Moira, 2014, emphasis added).

The issue of women's workplace attire also came up during my interview with Gabrielle, as she recalled very troubling experiences of sexual harassment within one of the call centers that she worked at. As she explains,

[...] there were clearly guys sending emails about me, about explicit things. I have no idea. At, at some point I had started to date a gentleman there and another gentleman at the call center—which nobody knew we were dating because I didn't want people to know that because, I don't know, I just, that's just how I roll—and one of the other men had said that he'd taken me out and slept with me and splayed me out naked, and blah, blah, blah, and I was like, “dude, we went for coffee. Like, you know, calm down, we went for coffee,” like you know. [...] The supervisor, or he was [a] mid-level supervisor-management, he had come out with

us too, eventually, later that night, and we had like a drink or two and then he had confirmed this guy's story, which that upset me strongly because this guy is my supervisor and—just for information's sake, 'cause I don't think it's really helpful for your study, I identified him as a snake in the grass, so then I was like I need to go out with this guy, the supervisor one, and I was like, I need to, you know, make sure my bases are covered, which I did. I took [a] photo of him doing drugs. Perfect. Like, it's terrible, but that's...you know, you gotta watch your back sometimes—but this, that supervisor had said that I had had sex with this guy and that he'd seen me naked and all this stuff and I was just like, “there was no nudity, like there was nothing that went down.” We drank coffee, then we met up and had a beer with my supervisor and then I went home, like, you know, and that was frustrating. And then, of course, the guy I was dating came back to me and he was like “look, I'm sure that this is just bullshit, but I'm just going to double check” and like, you know, and I was like “no, that's totally...you know.” But then I couldn't confront the supervisor because then they would know that something was going on between me and the gentleman that I was dating, which it was also explicitly said that if you were found to be dating someone, you're out. [...] If they were [aware of the sexual harassment that was happening], and this is just in the one call center, again, they *[management] didn't have very favorable views of women, so often the women were the ones who got in trouble for being sexually harassed and, you know, were told “maybe you shouldn't be wearing what you're wearing, maybe you shouldn't be doing what you're doing, you're, you know...why are you arousing the guys?” you know, blah, blah, blah [...]* I had contemplated going to HR with all the things that I had dealt with at this one call center, and I had talked to a friend of mine who worked there and she said that the manager was friends with the head of the HR and, and that I would just be putting myself in further vulnerabilities. But when I think back now, I mean I was quite young when I worked at the center, I was like 21, maybe, and I didn't know that I could like go to a lawyer or like, you know, actually seek action outside of that, so I didn't know any of those things were available to me. I mean, I knew my basic employment rights, but I didn't know what to do when the system had failed me (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014, emphasis added).

Koch-Schulte argued that the enforcement of such codes—within a context where workers are not visible to the clients they are serving—was a way to ensure ‘the maintenance of gender norms’ (2002, p.161). My findings support this conclusion, although, as noted, the focus of the policies (and enforcement of them) seemed to be on women, rather than men (as in Koch-Schulte's case). Although, as John highlights, the

dress code at his call center was, in some cases, negotiable. As he explains, in reference to resistance at the call center where he was employed,

I think the resistance came mainly, in like, if you got your numbers, like, down, and you got your call times well, then you got more leeway to, like, kind of fuck off. Because they...you were doing the one thing they wanted you to do. So, the people who like visibly resisted the most were the ones who actually tended to do their job the best, because if you're just visibly resisting and not doing your job, they'd just fire you. So, you had to do both. So, my friend, he was like that. Like he was really good at his job. And he got to wear, like, velour tracksuits, and shit like this, and like visible jewelry, and just like non business casual attire. Which was his act of resistance, but they couldn't screw with him because he was such a valuable employee, in his eyes (Interview, John, 2014).

Overall, my study both builds—and expands—on Koch-Schulte's work by maintaining a central focus on the everyday and resistance (and notably the Canadian context), while also exploring the larger connections between these actions and the gendered global political economy.

Other call center studies have highlighted further 'everyday' strategies of resistance within the industry. Mirchandani, in her study of worker resistance within Indian call centers, notes that it is common for workers to simply 'hang up' on callers in order to be able to meet their 'quotas' (2004, p.188). Another tactic documented by Mirchandani is the practice of workers giving customers a '*talla* or hoax solution' in order to stick to the time limits provided for calls (Mirchandani 2004, p.188, emphasis in original; see also Russell 2009, p.268). Other studies, such as Maitra and Siddiqui's study of 'immigrant women in contingent work' in Toronto—which included call center employees—have noted cases where workers use workplace conditions (such as a shortage of workers) as a

way to negotiate with management to obtain things within the workplace, such as receiving newer headsets (2005, p.4).

Other forms of everyday resistance within the industry are more directly focused on negotiating the existing hierarchical power relationship that exists between the workers and management. As Mulholland notes, ‘humour’ can be used as a way to ‘turn around the unequal power relations that exist between them and the managers...Making fun of a management style is a form of resistance (Collinson, 1992) and is important, for it rejects the unitary premise of the management discourse’ (2002, p.299). Murphy evidenced a similar tactic of resistance in her study of everyday resistance among flight attendants (1998, pp.511-515). In the study Murphy documents attendants making use of ‘mocking’ comments in their interactions with pilots, in an effort to challenge the hierarchical relationship—both in terms of ‘gender and status’—that exists between them (1998, pp.511-515). As Murphy explains, humour can be a powerful form of resistance because ‘it is one form of unobtrusive power renegotiation...through humour, resistance is shrouded in the ambiguities of accountability’ (Bell and Forbes, 1994, p.184) and is ultimately deniable, that is, “it was just a joke”(1998, p.514-515; see also Gossett and Kilker 2006, p.67). Here we see an attempt on the part of workers to test the limits of how far they can push their resistance without it becoming openly confrontational—using the guaranteed impunity that comes with such supposedly comedic expressions as a safeguard. Consequently, humour as resistance sits somewhere between the poles of ‘*passive resistance*’ and ‘*open defiance*’ outlined by Scott (1985, p.33). I explore this form of everyday resistance in more detail in the following section.

Below I outline a typology of some of the more prominent forms of everyday resistance that were documented during the interviews that I conducted with former call center employees, categorizing these actions into two broad categories: 1) feminized forms of everyday resistance, and 2) distinctly gendered forms of feminized everyday resistance. In doing so, I differentiate between those everyday forms of action that are pursued within the highly feminized industry—which can be pursued by both male and female workers—which manifest as a result of the lack of opportunities for collective resistance, and those which are similarly of an everyday nature, but which are not necessarily pursued only by women, but which hold greater significance when undertaken by women workers. The actions presented under both of these typological categorizations serve as support for argument to be attentive to the ways in which gendered labour (and broader societal structures) impact the forms of resistance available to particular workers in particular economic contexts, as well my assertion that there is a need to acknowledge that there has been a feminization of resistance practices within the call center industry—with everyday forms of action now serving as the most common forms of worker discontent (for the many reasons outlined in previous chapters). While there is some overlap with forms of resistance evidenced in previous studies of the industry, there also different types of resistance included as well. This does not represent an exhaustive account of resistance within the call center setting—indeed part of the motivation behind this project was to chronicle the boundless creativity of workers in resisting within this industry—although, it does give a fuller picture of the types of actions that workers rely on to express their discontent (whether in overt, or more covert ways) in the workplace.

In the following sections, I offer a more detailed discussion of the results overall. In particular, I address the value of utilizing a FEPGE to study gendered everyday worker resistance, and its place within—and relationship to—the larger global economy.

‘[...] the harder they are on you and the more they bring the axe down, the more you’re going to find ways around it and, you know, if they just respect you and treat you like a person then you have respect for the job, most of the time, you know. [...]...there’s always what you’re supposed to do and then there’s the culture of what gets done, and the culture of what gets done is set by the managers and supervisors, right, and, and in some ways if that doesn’t meet the needs of the workers then we set it...reset it ourselves, in whatever ways we have power to do so.’

- Interview, Gabrielle, 2014.

5.1 Typology Category A: Feminized Everyday Resistance Practices.

As noted, I have broken down the various forms of everyday worker resistance documented by interviewees into two categories: 1) feminized forms of everyday resistance (which are the focus in this first section), and 2) distinctly gendered forms of feminized everyday resistance (which I explore in the following section). Here I outline and offer some analysis of some of the broader forms of everyday resistance within the industry which, I argue, can be viewed as feminized, as there are effectively very few opportunities and openings for more collective and overt resistance. However, unlike the forms of resistance that I outline in the second section, they can be undertaken by both male and female employees within the highly feminized transnational call center industry (and carry the same significance when either utilizes these practices). While I briefly discuss each of these forms of worker action (in both sections), a more in depth analysis

and reflection of the interview data below, and the FEGPE employed throughout, is offered in the final section of this chapter.

i. Creativity as Resistance: Reclaiming the Monotonous and Controlled Call Center Workplace

As many of those interviewed noted, daily work within the call center setting is highly monitored, highly controlled, and highly monotonous. However, workers have come up with many inventive and ingenious ways to reclaim the workspace—albeit in bounded ways—through their individual acts of creativity. For example, as recounts,

...at the beginning of the call, and you know I have an unusual name so people would immediately ask me where I was based, so, I mean if they cared at all. They would, some people would just call me whatever they heard, which I ended up making different personalities for [...] if they called me Norah I would be Norah [...] Laura, Myra, Cora [...] there was a lot of, I guess, variance depending on what name they called me. That was kind of like a rule that I did for myself, just to make it more interesting, you know [...] If they called me Cora, she was super friendly, kind of an airhead, and then Norah was really mean, and Myra was flirtatious, and Laura was proper (Interview, 2014).

John similarly noted that one of his coworkers played around with their on-the-phone persona. As he details,

...my friend who moved up, did his job well, but skillfully, like, resisted in certain ways. So, like he got to wear like, I don't know, maybe like a baseball hat, or something like that, or he was allowed to listen to music with swear words in it, because he was able to show that his customers liked hearing it. And he also used, I believe it was him, who used as his pseudonym, which you could do, you could use an alter[nate] name, I just used my own, but most people did, his was Sean Carter¹⁶⁵ [sic], like Puffy. [Laughs] And people were like, it's like, "Thank you

¹⁶⁵ The real name of the rapper/singer known as 'Puffy' is Sean John Combs, not Sean Carter. Rapper Jay Z's real name is Shawn Carter, however, given that John referenced the stage name Puffy in the interview, it is clear that he was referring to Sean Combs.

for calling [company name] customer support, Sean Carter here, how may I help you?” right, and then they’re like “What’s up, Puff?” So, yeah, so there was some things that were accepted as like resistant, like having the music on, right, but some things had to be fought for, and most people just conformed, basically (Interview, John, 2014).

Another interviewee, Ben, provided an additional example how creativity is expressed within the monotonous call center work environment. As he recalls:

[...] Saturday morning you come into work, and you start off in the eastern time zone because...or actually you would start off in the Atlantic time zone and because you wouldn’t be permitted to call the eastern time zone until a certain time, so there would be only a thousand calls and there would be 20 people and they would be being called and you’d run into a gap and you completely emptied the...the bin, and there would be another gap, and then the Eastern time zone would open up, and the Eastern zone’s very big, but still, you know, you would at the end of a month, you would’ve mostly have called those numbers four or five times, and you would not have much to do. Between...there would be large gaps. So you’d want to fill it by talking to people, crosswords, passing notes, matter of fact, [...] I recall one time that [a coworker and I] had a poetry contest between the two of us (Interview, Ben, 2014).

At another point, he also mentioned that “once I let the woman next door to me paint my nails. ‘cause, I mean, they’re painting their nails, they’re not supposed to, but it’s something you can do while you’re not, you know, while you’re just doing stuff” (Interview, Ben, 2014). Another participant, Gabrielle noted similar creative and artistic actions within the workplace. As she explains, ‘...often people would put up drawings. ‘Cause, I mean, you’re sitting there all night so you would draw things, most of us would draw things, and if you did a good drawing you’d peg it on the board [in your cubicle]’ (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014).

These forms of action importantly allow workers the opportunity to reclaim some control and freedom within the highly controlled, and monotonous, call center environment.

Examples provided in Koch-Schulte's study of resistance within Canadian call centers suggests that these types of actions are fairly common within the call center setting. As she explains,

Workers frequently mentioned focusing their attention on [a] more personally interesting activity while on the telephone. Reading, knitting, drawing, crossword puzzles and computer games would entertain agents while continuing telephone work. Policies regarding these diversions were enforced at varying levels. Some firms would ignore it. Sylvia's workplace allows crossword puzzles, but not books. Camilia explained that she is able to read at work: "My department is pretty easy...they don't mind that you're reading. We are not supposed to, though, and the policy is we are not supposed to be reading." Lana explains stricter rule enforcement as she was reprimanded for playing computer games while conducting business: "I got in trouble for playing solitaire...She [a manager] comes up and says, 'How do you find time to work with your customers and play solitaire?' I just looked at her. I was like, What?" Similarly, a colleague of Candice in Winnipeg creates origami figures throughout his shift (Koch-Schulte 2002, p.166).

While these types of action do not necessarily challenge the problematic aspects of call center work, they do, again, serve as a way for workers to be creative within a highly controlled environment—one in which employers seem to do almost everything possible to stop workers from experiencing any autonomy. Many of the actions described above echo earlier findings from workplace studies, such as Donald F. Roy's (1959) 'Banana Time' study, in which he undertook two months of participant observation research within a factory. In the study Roy details the ways in which factory workers (including himself) combatted the 'beast of monotony' (1959, p.158). He details both individualistic,

as well as social or interactional, strategies for doing so.¹⁶⁶ First Roy outlines the development of ‘a game of work,’ which he explains, ‘...might be described as a continuous sequence of short-range production goals with achievement rewards in the form of activity change [...] Henri de Man speaks of “clinging to the remnants of joy in work,” and this situation represented just that’ (1959, p.161). Following from this he details various interactional ‘times’ and ‘themes’ that also served to combat the monotony of the work in the factory (including the aforementioned ‘banana time’), explaining that ‘the physical interplay which momentarily halted work activity would initiate verbal exchanges and thought processes to occupy group members until the next interruption. The group interactions this not only marked off time; they gave it content and hurried it along’ (Roy 1959, p.162).

ii. Hitting them Where it Hurts: The Bottom Line

It is important to note that everyday worker actions, such as acts of resistance, do not need to have a larger impact beyond the workplace to be seen as important (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p. 14). That said, there are forms of everyday worker practices and strategies that do have the potential to have a significant effect, over time on company profits. These actions can also serve to problematize company policies that customers, as well as workers, view to be unfair and unjust. Moira, a former customer service agent for

¹⁶⁶ While the degree of surveillance and monitoring within the workplace experienced by Roy and his colleagues was nowhere near as pervasive as it is within modern day call centers (1959, p.159), the types of actions he describes (albeit slightly different in form to those outlined above) do take place within call centers.

a large transnational corporation, provided a particularly powerful example of this type of everyday strategy. As she explains,

I didn't like being the representative of Company X, which is a company that I, even then, I thought was totally soulless. I didn't like their policies of...that seemed to me to screw over people who didn't have money. For example, [...] people would close off their [accounts]¹⁶⁷ and then think that it was done, like they didn't owe anything anymore because they paid off their balance, and then when the billing date, when the billing cycle ended they would be charged interest. So it's a closed account, but they were still charged interest, and most people thought they closed their account so they don't owe anything left. And then you would get charged interest on interest, and some people who called me, you know they'd been charged interest on this tiny interest amount from one month and it had multiplied over five years to like thousands of dollars and they owed that. Like they legitimately owed that and, and I had to stand behind that or lose my job (Interview, Moira, 2014).

She continued, describing how she and her coworkers decided, in a deliberate and strategic way, to fight back against these policies at an everyday level. Here each of the women involved had factored in the time that they had left at the job before they were planning to quit, and the types of actions they could get away with during that timeframe. As Moira explains, after a certain point while working at the call center,

every single person who had interest on their account I would reverse it, because I had the, I could do that and so I was like, and actually a lot of people did that. Jean and Marie, my friends who I made there, like we'd talk about it too, because we each, I think Marie was the first one to quit and she had this three month thing, and I was like, "yeah that's awesome, I'm going to do that too!" and then Jean quit, and then I quit after that. And so, yeah for three months we were like, "we're going to suck this company dry of all this, all this unfair interest that they're

¹⁶⁷ Elements of this sentence relating to the call center company where the participant was employed, and its policies, have been omitted or adapted (as indicated) in order to further protect the identity of the participant.

charging people.” Yeah. So we just like, every single call, even if they didn’t ask for it (Interview, Moira, 2014).¹⁶⁸

She further explains that ‘we came up with it together when...when she decided to quit, and I was like you could just get...it was like...she was at her limit, she needed the money but she couldn’t do it anymore. So I was like you could still get three months of pay for not doing the job, those things that you hate about the job...’ (Interview, Moira, 2014). Here, women workers within the call center workplace have undertaken direct and deliberate actions at the everyday level that have the potential to impact the bottom line of a transnational company. And importantly, through these actions, these women were able to carve out a space to exert their agency and regain some control over their workplace decisions, ultimately fighting back against corporate policies that they deemed to be unfair and unjust. In essence, they demonstrate that workers who are often seen as a ‘power takers’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p. 12), can potentially serve as agents of change—even if that change is slow, and incremental in nature.

Moira was skeptical that these actions would have any larger financial impact on the company, but she asserted that it was not necessarily important that they have any larger impact, as actions such as these allowed workers a bit more control (Interview, 2014).

Hobson and Seabrooke similarly argue that, ‘...everyday actions do not have to ‘win’ to

¹⁶⁸ Many of the forms of resistance discussed during interviews relied on what Scott termed a ‘venerable popular culture of resistance’ (1989, p.35).

be meaningful' (2007, p. 14). However, while these actions do not need to have a larger impact to be viewed as significant, they still do carry the potential to effect the company's bottom line (and policies) over time, and if spread across call centers.

Similarly, Sarah, a former call center employee who had performed technical support for a transnational electronics company, recalled that through her interactions with other departments at the call center she had found strategies to navigate and negotiate ways to help both select customers, as well as fellow employees, all while potentially costing the company. As Sarah explains,

...we learned, because where we worked we talked to the people, our like coworkers, who worked in sales and we found out the ways that you could, if you wanted, like ways you could get things thrown in, like your computer system upgraded. And so we found out ways of, like what to say, and how to escalate a call, like if we were calling in, of how to get things, free things, from the company. And so we all ended up leaving [the company] and buying Company Y computers and calling in to technical support, to customer support or whatever, and complaining and escalating to a certain point where we got a bunch of free stuff thrown at us. And I remember that we all, we all at one point had Company Y—something Company Y—because we knew how to manipulate the system because we had learned that through our minimum relationships with the people in sales through transferring calls, that that's what you had to say, and that's the way you had to say it, and that's what you had to ask for, in order to get those things and, so for us, that was more of the incentive, was like learning the inner workings of the company so that you could serve you and your technological needs after (Interview, Sarah, 2014).

Sarah continues, noting that she, and her coworkers, would also strategically communicate these strategies to customers who they deemed worthy. As she outlines,

I don't remember a specific case, but I know that we did this quite frequently which was, like if you call back and talk to sales, or you ask for this person in

sales and ask to speak to a manager, or tell them that you're dissatisfied with this and they will give you this, right, I mean, we would try to communicate those kind of tricks of the trade to...but only to obviously to customers that to...in our minds, like, deserved that insider information [...] we always, like, on an individual basis, we always tried to get whatever we could out of them. Right, and it was just like "yeah, we're going to stick it to them because like they treat us like crap and we deserve it," right, but then obviously for us to be able to communicate with a, with a stranger, customer, over the phone, all of the things that they would need to do to get all those things, we didn't take those risks. Right, because there was the risk that there was a manager listening and then once they found out that we were telling customers like that we we'd fired in a, like, in a minute. Right, so, I mean, there was, there was a certain extent of things that you could share with the customers in terms of that sort of insider knowledge, but it was never anything that could be considered or perceived as, like undue, like, I don't know, assistance for these customers to like, you know, stick it to the company too (Interview, Sarah, 2014).

Sarah, like Moira, was quite skeptical that these everyday actions would have any larger impact on the company's profits. Although, she did note that it was a positive aspect of the job for her and her coworkers, stating, 'I'm not sure how much of a dent we actually made. But for us it was wonderful because we got free stuff' (Interview, Sarah, 2014).

Here the very fact that workers, in a coordinated way, found ways to access the company's products free of charge (therefore impacting the company's profits, even if in a small way), speaks to the political nature of such everyday forms resistance. In particular, we can see how such actions, represent, as Scott asserts, 'the ordinary means of class struggle' (1989, p.34).

Another way in which workers were able to potentially impact the call center company's bottom line was by working only during the training period (during which time, call centers make costly investments in their employees), and then quit before going on out on the floor and taking calls. As Moira noted, 'they also had paid training, it was two months

of training [...] it was quite extensive right, so I told a few of my friends who were off for the summer that I was working that you could just go and do this training and make \$2000.00 or something like that and then quit. [...] So I know a few people who did that' (Interview, Moira, 2014). Here the call center employees (or rather, paid trainees) flip the script on call centers by exploiting them for a source of quick, and relatively stress free (at least in comparison to the stress involved in handling live calls) employment. By investing considerable amounts of money into training new hires, call centers risk losing big when these employees quit after the requisite training, or shortly after they are placed out on the floor.

Further, Anna noted that she refused to perform the sales tasks that she was assigned to do, in addition to providing customer service to customers, at a transnational financial institution's call center. As she explains,

I honestly just wouldn't sell things. [...] They want you to sell things to people even though they don't need it. And like you have to pay for bank accounts and then they're like "oh, why don't you open another bank account? So then you can have this bank account for this," but then they're paying for it. I [inaudible] want to make them pay for it if they don't need it. So, I don't know, I don't like selling things that are stupid to people that don't need it. [...] So I would just not sell. But then I would get talked to about my sales progress (Interview, Anna, 2014).

When asked if she thought that these actions would have a larger impact on the company, she stated that, 'I think if everyone did that then it would be an issue. But, like, most people that were hired were good at sales. So. I'm just not a salesperson, especially when I'm not told I'm going to be a salesperson' (Interview, Anna, 2014).

iii. Creative Work Avoidance Practices

Most of the call center employees that I interviewed also noted creative ways that they would avoid taking calls, even if for a short time. One type of action, in particular, that came up across multiple interviews was finding ways to control or avoid calls at the end of scheduled shifts, so that workers could leave at the time they were scheduled to. For example, as Moira recounted,

...there was a bus that was—that left at 12:05am, so, and the next bus was not for another half an hour later. So we finished at twelve, and we would just—people would you know be putting on their coats and stuff as they were still talking, and then we—you would just hope that you didn't get a call right at like 11:58pm or something, 'cause you had to take it. 'Cause if you did—if you didn't, even it was a minute or two minutes before the end of your shift, then you get in trouble. So if you had a call at 11:58pm that took 15 minutes, you just had to stay (Interview, Moira, 2014).

When I asked her if there were any tactics that she could use with the phones to make sure that she did not get another call right away when the end of the shift was approaching to avoid this, she responded by noting that,

There were several tactics. Like we...I could be really chatty with my customers, which would kind of mess up my call times in terms of statistics, which was also something that we had to—there were targets that we had to hit. But it was okay it was like a cost-benefit analysis, right—I could mess up my statistics or go home at the time I'm supposed to. So, and then you could just, when a customer hangs up you have to press a button to get to the next, to hang up on your end, so sometimes I just wouldn't press that button and just have dead air, which also you'd get in trouble for if they figured it out... (Interview, Moira, 2014).

When asked if she was aware if others were using similar work avoidance tactics within the workplace she responded that ‘Oh yeah, I learned from people who had been there already. We would often, especially over lunch, discuss strategies how to avoid calls especially at the end of your shift’ (Interview, Moira, 2014). Similarly, John noted that, ‘...you picked up [helpful tactics], [...] that was the savvy thing, you picked up from each other. It was like the...how to work around the system...’ (Interview, 2014). He further stated that ‘when you talked to your coworkers that’s when you got the real tricks and the connive-y shit that like they [management] wouldn’t tell you’ (Interview, John, 2014). This, of course, is a perfect example of the ‘venerable popular culture’ that Scott had discussed in relation to everyday forms of resistance (1989, p.35).

Sarah—who provided technical support for a computer company—noted that she, similar to Moira, would strategically handle calls toward the end of her shift to avoid going over the time that she was scheduled to be at work. As she recalls,

...I would always be really nervous around the around end of my shift because I was really worried that I would get like a trouble shooting for internet, like a wireless call, which would be an hour and a half phone call. If it came right before the end of my shift then I couldn’t hang up on that customer and would have to stay, you know, for whatever, how much longer on my shift to finish the phone call before I could go home. [...] so what I usually did was looking at, like if I was on a phone call that I knew needed to end or knew that it was going to end I would try to stretch out the phone call and talk longer, so it was just kind of like against the logic of shortening your phone calls...like would talk longer so that it would overlap with the end of my shift, do you understand what I’m saying, so that way I wouldn’t be able to take another call because that call would finish and then I would be done my shift so I would log out (Interview, Sarah, 2014).

Jeremy—an outbound survey center worker—also noted that workers in his call center (including himself) would manipulate the system to avoid getting calls, particularly toward the end of their shifts.¹⁶⁹ As he recalls,

I actually have [used the pause button] a few times. But not, not like for the whole hours. But they I think that they, they [the monitors] can see that you, you're pausing, and I do think that they, they would warn you if you paused for too long. [...] Ah, there was this girl, she was...she's been working there for quite long and she does that a lot, I guess. And, ah, she just kind of pause for like ten, twenty minutes, then just talked to her boyfriend, or something. [...] [The pause button would be used] multiple times [a day], just 'cause you get a bit tired after two or three calls and people rejecting you [inaudible] then they do that. [...] The longest I did without them telling me take a break was probably twenty minutes. Yeah. It was, it was, the really lengthy survey, and at the end of it I was kind of like, I really don't want to get another one, because...oh yeah, because the thing about doing lengthy survey is if you get, if, if say, in the last minute of your shift you, you connected with...with a participant and he's interested, you had to finish the survey. So that survey would take 30, 30 minutes to one hour, so, some people would just, at the last thirty minutes, they would just like pause completely. So, yeah. So, actually, I think I might have paused for 30 minutes, not...rather than 20 minutes (Interview, Jeremy, 2014).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Jeremy noted that he felt, to some degree management was aware of—and tolerated—these types of actions. As he explains, 'I think management are aware of it. Like, a little bit. But they probably just kind of let, let some those slide. [...] I feel like they just want to keep people there because [...] people quit rather than getting laid off' (Interview, Jeremy, 2014).

¹⁷⁰ Interestingly, there was a tension, or disconnect, between the conception and meaning of worker resistance that Jeremy provided during the interview (he mentioned acts like not showing up for work, sending letters to the management, or talking others out of seeking employment there, which—aside from perhaps, openly sending letters to management—tended to be of a more 'everyday' nature). However, when asked if he viewed the actions he noted within his workplace, such as the use of the pause button for significant chunks of time (outlined above), or his coworkers finishing abandoned surveys, were acts of resistance, he stated 'No. I consider them just as slacking off. [...] because it's, it's a...I feel like it's, it's part of the job to be productive. And at that time they didn't really enforce any [...] irrational or unreasonable requirements. So I just felt like it was just my, my or my coworkers incompetence that led us to that kind of behaviors' (Interview, Jeremy, 2014). Although, when asked if he thought that these forms actions can have an impact on the company's functioning and productivity, he asserted, 'I think that these little things add up' (Interview, Jeremy, 2014).

Gabrielle also noted that she, as well as workers at one of the call centers where she had been employed, would use similar tactics to avoid calls. And often times, as she explains (much like the other examples noted above in this section), these tactics would be shared amongst workers within the call center. As Gabrielle recalls,

SR: So, you mentioned the sort of high level of control and monitoring that was happening in, in the work environments. To your knowledge, or maybe, you can speak to experience, were there ways to get around that, like if you...if you wanted to?

G: Yeah, I used to just sit in the coding link longer on every call. And *because we all did it then nobody was in trouble*, right because, you know, if you all, at the same timing for everything, like if you're spending the same amount of time coding at the end of a call then nobody's going to get yelled at because *that's how long it takes, right*.

SR: So is that more informal, that that was, that was just known, that was sort of known within the group and people just followed that?

G: Yeah, it was kind of known and you just kind of...I mean when you had a new person...like new people came in in groups, like, in waves, and they would often sit a new person next to a more senior person so that you could help them through anything that they have, so then you would kind of be like, "*stop doing it so quickly*," like, you know.

SR: So there was an informal knowledge network that was happening?

G: Yeah.

SR: It's really interesting. And so when you mentioned you would sort of sit in this coding a little bit longer, so that means that you weren't actively taking or making calls, that was just you doing offline work?

G: Um huh (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014, emphasis added).

Maira also noted other everyday forms of creative work avoidance within her call center workplace. For example, she explained that,

M: there was one guy who would try to...I don't know how he did this...but he would try to make it so that the whole team got like five minutes off or something by jamming the system or something like that [...]. There were like several calls and he would just...I don't know how he did this, but he would just redirect.

SR: That's interesting. Did it work?

M: Sometimes...Sometimes it was like half an hour or something.

Samuel, on the other hand, explained that he had managed to find ways of both stretching out scheduled breaks (with the help of his coworkers), as well as time between making his survey calls. He noted that he had been able to stretch out his half an hour break times (sometimes by an extra half an hour), on a regular basis, by talking to and distracting the supervisor (Interview, 2014). When asked if he had ever been warned about this behavior, he stated, 'not necessarily, because they didn't know that we were manipulating them' (Interview, Samuel, 2014).¹⁷¹ Although, other participants, such as Sarah, noted that not being back from their breaks at the scheduled times would be penalized. As she recalls, 'they would dock every minute that you were late out of your paycheck [...] They would accumulate late minutes and then at the end of a week, or at the end of two weeks, they would take off however many accumulated late minutes you were from your paycheck [...] they would accumulate them until they could take off like an hour off your pay'

¹⁷¹ Interestingly, when asked about what the term worker resistance meant to him, he responded that 'it means working for your rights. You know, kind of like, fight for what you think is right. Or...try to make the work environment a little more comfortable, I guess' (Interview, Samuel, 2014). When I asked him to provide an example of how this would be achieved, he simply stated that it would be through a 'strike.' (Interview, Samuel, 2014). He further noted that this collective conception of resistance when asked if worker resistance looks different, or has a different meaning for him, in the call center context. However, in contrast, when I asked him if he, or his coworkers, had ever undertaken any forms of resistance, he mentioned the extended breaks that he details in this excerpt (which can easily be categorized as an everyday form of resistance). So, there is a clear tension between his conceptions of worker resistance, and the forms of resistance that he actually made use of in the call center.

(Interview, 2014). So, as with many forms of everyday resistance, it is important to keep in mind that they are not available to all workers, in all contexts (and, like overt or collective forms of resistance, also carry a certain degree of risk with undertaking them).

Further, Sarah noted the use of certain (at least at the time) unnecessary technical support procedures to get customers off of the phone. As she explains,

...maybe if you felt lazy or you didn't want to, didn't want talk to that customer you...we used to do things like say "okay, well you can...you need to do a defrag to your system," which takes like a couple of hours, and so, that was a good way of getting the customer off the phone and moving on to a new customer. So I would, like we would do something like that or make them do a complete, like a complete reboot of their system, like have them uninstall everything then reinstall everything and so that was a way of like getting off the phone with that customer and having a break from that call if it was like a really stressful call, instead of going through the steps with them, then we would just like sort of go around that, and you know, "oh, you need to do a defrag" or "oh, you need to do a reboot, and that'll take a couple of hours and call back, like, when it's all done" right. [...] it wouldn't help them at all [...] because at the end of the day we had to do, like, if we knew the computer was like, damaged, like there was a serious hardware or software problem you had to troubleshoot everything before you get approved to have it sent away to the customer care...have the machine actually sent away and so that process usually took about two and a half hours to go through and troubleshoot everything. And, so, I mean, if you were annoyed, or if you were tired and you just didn't want to do that two and half hour phone call and you wanted to pass it on to somebody else, then you would tell them to do a reboot and, I mean, the reboot would've been one of the things that they had to do but they probably didn't have to do it right then and I mean, whether or not, at the end of the day, it fixed their computer that was like truly broken, no. It wouldn't have, wouldn't have made a difference (Interview, Sarah, 2014).¹⁷²

¹⁷² Interestingly, Sarah noted that if her managers or supervisors had heard call center agents doing this, the response would not have been completely negative. As she asserts, 'Yes and no. They would say that was bad because you should've helped that customer but then they would also say, but at the end of the... or they would maybe not say to us, but we would know, that they also were happy with that in the sense that it cut the call in half and that meant better numbers for them, which meant bigger bonuses for them on their end, right. Because if they had shorter call times in the department than that meant

Anna noted that she had found ways to manipulate the order of calls in ‘queue,’ in order to temporarily avoid taking new calls. In the following excerpt from the interview, she outlines in more depth how and why this tactic would be used:

[...] There was one way to like on the hard phone,¹⁷³ you could press like a button that would put you at the bottom of the queue. So if you didn’t want to take a call you could just keep pressing that button and it would put you below, like, everyone else that’s taking calls. [...] [I would do that] [...] like probably five [times a day]. So like, that would help also like, ‘cause it’s...you’re timed between calls, they don’t want it to be long, so if you use that button then you could reduce that time in order to like complete other things quickly on the computer. [...] my team lead told us about the button (Interview, Anna, 2014).

Patricia similarly noted that workers in one of the call centers where she was employed would avoid getting calls through the use a ‘pause’ button (Interview, 2014). When asked if she made use of this tactic as well to avoid incoming calls, she stated, ‘probably. Like everybody did it so it didn’t really matter. But not often ‘cause it they, if they saw, if they picked up on that you would get in trouble’ (Interview, Patricia, 2014). Suggesting that, as with many other forms of resistance, the opportunities to make use of them are not unlimited.

Another interviewee, Ben, similarly recalled a series of everyday forms of work avoidance that were present in the call center where he was employed. He explains,

everybody won, like, quote unquote. Like, obviously the managers and supervisors were getting incentives to have shorter call times’ (Interview, Sarah, 2014).

¹⁷³ Earlier in the interview, Anna clarified that the ‘hard phone’ was the actual physical telephone, and the ‘soft phone’ was a telephone that could be used through her computer (and it was the soft phone that her headset was connected to) (Interview, 2014).

There's the blue flu of course, [it] is when you call in sick because you not only don't want to go to work but you're workplace situation is bad and I'm pretty sure that some people did that.^{174,175} There were...when you're dealing with a bunch of young people you're going to encounter days when they don't want to come to work because they don't enjoy it or because they'd rather do something else. [...] They take the calls at a much leisurely pace. They wait a few moments before they pass the call through. They get up, they do a walk around. They go for a glass of water, something like that. Bathroom breaks and all that sort of stuff.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Another participant, Anna, noted that she had called in sick about ten times during the three months she was employed at the call center (Interview, 2014). Also, Jeremy noted that, 'there was this guy who told me that, if you, if you really don't, don't feel like it the day your, your shift is about to start, he would come in and would take a sip of water and just like choke on it on purpose, so your voice sounds, kind of hoarse. [...] Yeah, and then, you would go talk to the monitor and the monitor would let you go home. I've never done that myself, but he said he's done that a few times' (Interview, Jeremy, 2014). Similarly, Patricia explained that she would take sick days because 'they wouldn't always really be that flexible with your scheduling and like, it's, a lot of weekends and evenings' (Interview, 2014). Although, John noted that illnesses did actually spread throughout the call center where he was employed (Interview, 2014). Sarah noted that, on one occasion, when she had called in sick, her employers requested a doctor's note to substantiate the illness, which he explains, had the effect of dissuading her from doing so again in the future (Interview, 2014). Although, in general, she noted that, in the call center, 'they're not paid sick days, so that's the biggest control, is that a lot of people just can't afford to be sick. And so people don't take sick days because they're not...they're not paid, they're not unionized, they're not anything, they don't have any rights in terms...in that respect' (Interview, Sarah, 2014).

¹⁷⁵ Calling in sick to work is not an uncommon practice within the industry. As Jackson notes, 'Call Center Careers conducted a survey on call center workers who called in sick, but weren't medically ill. Of these workers: 34% revealed that they call in sick because they do not feel appreciated, 19% call in sick because they don't like their jobs, 10% call in sick because they don't like their company, and 9% don't like how their boss treats them' (2008, p.2).

¹⁷⁶ Jeremy similarly noted that one of his female colleagues took 'three twenty minute bathroom breaks' (Interview, 2014). Layla also used bathroom breaks to temporarily escape calls (Interview, 2014). Moira noted that she and her colleagues would pretend to go to the bathroom, but instead meet up in a stairwell instead to talk (which was not being recorded by cameras) (Interview, 2014). When asked about the use of bathroom breaks and smoking breaks to temporarily avoid work, Patricia explained that 'I don't think it was overly excessive, because we would like be, we would have to have like monthly meetings [with] the supervisors about like how much time was spent for certain things. And like they would like they would tell you if you were spending, taking too much time on bathroom breaks or something like that. I think one thing it always bothered me, and some other people that, people that smoked would get an additional break time. That

They, as I said, they only find out about it if they're monitoring you or paying attention to who's walking around. [...] Now the more serious ones, where they're actually damaging the surveys, entering false surveys. If you enter in a false survey and someone catches you, i.e. they're monitoring you, or you complete the survey after the person's hung up, and they're monitoring you, you lose your job (Interview, Ben, 2014).

Another participant, Jeremy (who, like Ben, worked in a survey based call center) noted that workers would tamper with surveys. As he describes, 'some participants would abandon the survey at midway and you have to, ah, mark that survey as, as ah, as incomplete, or, or something else that doesn't count as complete. But you want more completes, so, some people would just, like, fake the rest of the survey' (Interview, Jeremy, 2014). However, he chose not to do so, noting that, instead, 'I would just kind of swear to myself [if I experienced an abandoned survey]. But I'm just too cowardly to take that risk' (Interview, Jeremy, 2014). Although, in order to avoid work—albeit on a temporary basis—he did strategically ask his supervisor questions to take up time (Interview, Jeremy, 2014). Patricia noted similar work avoidance and delay strategies. She recalled that, among other things, she would wait until her shift had started to get her system ready for the day (something she was supposed to do beforehand), and she would

seemed kind of like, well what, just because I don't smoke, I don't get to have extra time? [...] I don't really know exactly [how long the smokers were allowed for these breaks]. [...] I never heard of anybody being told, like you know, you're taking too many, too many [smoking] breaks. Like that didn't seem to be something that anybody was trying to limit or quantify really. Again, it would bother me, that's why I would kind of, like, take a longer bathroom break, or go on a bathroom break when I just needed a break, because, well, you know, like that's essentially what people were doing when they were smoking, they needed that' (Interview, Patricia, 2014). Both Gabrielle and Moira noted that they started to smoke when she began working at the call centers where they were employed, as a way to get time away from calls (Interview, 2014).

also stay on the line after a caller had hung up, in order to avoid getting another call straight away¹⁷⁷ (Interview, Patricia, 2014).

Calling in sick as a strategy for work avoidance, which was noted by several participants, was also highlighted by Koch-Schulte (2002, p.158-159). She notes that, interesting, ‘missing work can be a delaying tactic to secure additional time for seeking a new job’ (Koch-Schulte 2002, p.159). Barnes similarly documented this form of action within her study on Australian call centers. As one of the participants in her study explained, ‘[the company] is now under the assumption that a monitored worker is a productive worker—don’t give them any time to slack off and they won’t be able to. The staff resent it. It may get the desired result in that it gets the work done, but it has its repercussions on things like sick leave and staff turnover. (*Austravel*, Sydney, 2000)’ (2004, p.131). Another participant in my study, Samuel, explained that he and some of his friends that he worked with would take their ‘sick’ days together (Interview, 2014), which speaks to the collective element of individualized forms of worker resistance noted by Scott (1989, p.35).

While not specifically looking at work within call centers, Martin et al. (2010) note that such actions—which they broadly refer to as acts of ‘time banditry’¹⁷⁸—can have a negative impact on companies. As they explain,

¹⁷⁷ Although, she noted that she did not stay on the line for longer than a minute after a caller had hung up (Interview, Patricia, 2014).

¹⁷⁸ Martin et al. state that ‘we define “time banditry” as the propensity for employees to engage in unsanctioned non-work related activities during work time, including off-task activities in the workplace and coming to work late’ (2010, p.27).

what these workers all have in common is that they are using paid organizational time for personal reasons. This can have a significant effect upon the bottom line of an organization, whether it is readily apparent or not. While the act of time banditry may seem harmless in some cases, the financial impact of the overall loss of potentially productive time is estimated to total \$759 billion across all U.S. companies (Malachowski, 2005). Human resource officials generally assume employees waste around .94 h during the work day and have figured this amount into overall salaries. However a recent study by Salary.com found the average worker wastes 2.09 h per day at work. Thus, if the average employee is working 8 hour days and wastes 2.09 h, this costs organizations \$5270 per employee annually (cf. Malachowski, 2005) (Martin et al. 2010, pp.26-27).

Again, while this information is not related directly to the everyday acts of resistance (in particular, acts of work avoidance) within the call center industry, this statement does suggest that the effect of such tactics, in line with Scott's work, 'may have aggregate consequences all out of proportion to their banality when considered singly' (1989, p.34). Thus, while such actions need not have a larger impact to be seen as meaningful (like those discussed in the second sub-section above), it should be noted that they hold the potential to.

iv. Anonymous Call Center Worker Blogs: Raising Awareness of What Life is Really Like on the Other Side of the Line.

As Richards asserts, the internet has opened up new avenues for employee resistance, against the backdrop of declining opportunities for 'collective action' (2012, p.22).¹⁷⁹ In

¹⁷⁹ Richards notes a number of actions (that could be easily classified as everyday forms of resistance) within the organizational behavior literature concerned with employee internet use. These include: 'downloading MP3 music files and accessing streamed media (Valli, 2004), surfing for non-work related information (Wen and Lin, 1998), moonlighting for extra income (Adler *et al.*, 2008), shopping (Chen *et al.*, 2008), viewing pornography (Young and Case, 2004), gambling (Blanchard and Henle, 2008),

particular, new forms of ‘everyday’ resistance have been opened up through the internet, including the use of ‘counterinstitutional websites’(Gossett and Kilker 2006, p.63) and ‘workblogs’ (Richards 2008, p.95; Swartz 2003) by workers within the call center industry. Or, relatedly, the use of online discussion forums by call center employees to post questions and comments about the industry (e.g. babble.ca discussion board, 2008). These types of outlets can allow workers to post anything from mundane experiences of day-to-day call center life (which are important in their own right), as well as more political critiques of the work conditions being faced by workers in the industry (and some, as in the case of the babble.ca discussion forum that I discuss below, can serve as crucial moves on the part of workers to gain information about collective organization). As such, they represent an important potential arena for worker resistance.

While this form of resistance was not discussed during any of the interviews that I conducted with former call center workers, there are several examples of such blogs online. One particularly notable example that I came across during my research was the blog titled ‘The Secret Diary of a Call Centre: Dispatches from the Headset,’ written by ‘Call Guy.’ As Call Guy explains in the blog’s about section:

conducting domestic chores (Block, 2011), looking up football scores (Lim, 2002), and, trading stock shares (Griffiths, 2003) (Richards 2012, p.27, emphasis in original). Similarly, one of the former workers that I interviewed noted that he had played games on his computer, as well as used it to search the internet for non-work purposes, while on the job (Interview, Samuel, 2014). He also noted—although not directly related to internet use on the job—that people within his call center had been fired for not turning off their cell phones while at work (Interview, Samuel, 2014). Other participants, such as Anna (Interview, 2014) and Patricia (Interview, 2014), and Gabrielle (Interview, 2014), however, noted that many non-work related websites, such as social media sites, were blocked, and therefore workers had limited opportunities to use computers for non-work purposes at the call centers where they were employed. Although, the restrictions on this varied between call centers.

Welcome to my blog. I am Call-Guy, so named because I have spent more time than I care to admit at the sharp-end of the call-centre industry. Maybe you're one of the many thousands of people who has spoken to me, shouted or screamed at me? We'll probably never know. My aim in this blog is to bitch about my job, but whilst doing it to explore the wider issues around the call-centre business. Maybe you work in a call centre too or you have a friend who does, or you're just interested in the hidden world at the other end of the line. If you fall into any of these categories feel free to leave any comments or drop me a line (Call Guy, The Secret Diary of a Call Centre).

Along with his own posts, Call Guy also interesting set up a feature on the blog whereby call centers workers visiting the site can complete a short interview via Survey Monkey,¹⁸⁰ and their responses will be posted on the blog. At present the blog features responses from over seventy call center workers, both male and female, covering a diverse range of experiences. Most of the responses provided by participants touch on several themes present throughout my dissertation (including forms of resistance—even if not identified as such—that workers undertake in this setting). Below is a sample of some of the responses provided to various questions included in Call Guy's online survey:

Interview 1, 'Call Guy' (in response to: 'worst call'): I took a call from a lady who's [sic] mother-in-law was waiting for a vacuum cleaner she had ordered. It had been delayed as someone had made an error putting in the postcode so I initially had trouble finding the order on the system. I managed to identify the problem and to get it resolved within about 10 minutes, but had the person being so nasty to me—really spitting venom that it left me shaking afterwards. It was a long time ago, but the thought of it still makes me shudder. It left me wondering

¹⁸⁰ The questions included in the online interviews/ surveys include the following: Name/ Nomme de plume; Time wearing the headset & Type of call centre (e.g inbound/ outbound/ insurance/mail-order/ etc); The best thing about working in a call centre is...; If I could change one thing about my call centre it would be...; Most callers are...; Worst call; Funniest call centre moment; Call centres – good or bad?; Why?; Does the call centre have a future? (<https://dairyofacallcentreguy.wordpress.com/call-centre-interviews/>).

what kind of person feels that having a vacuum cleaner delayed by a few days is justification for making another human being feel that way (The Secret Diary of a Call Centre).

Interview 1, ‘Call Guy’ (in response to: ‘call centres—good or bad? Why?): [...] it’s not the call centre per-se that is bad, but rather I feel there are two call centres. The call centre of dreams and the call centre of nightmares. The call centre of dreams is what the call centre was originally meant to be in its idealized form—a place focused on the quality of customer service a place where agents have the right training, support, and motivation and the ability to make a difference. The call centre of nightmares is focused more on revenues—a place where the primary concern is not customer service, but simply getting through as many calls as possible. In this centre agents are poorly trained, poorly motivated and suffer with empathy burn-out (The Secret Diary of a Call Centre).

Interview 12, ‘Amy’ (in response to ‘the best thing about working in a call centre is...’) The mute button (The Secret Diary of a Call Centre).¹⁸¹

Interview 16, ‘Claire’ (in response to ‘worst call’): When I had a gentleman threaten my life over the phone, and then two weeks later I was woken up at 2am with that same gentleman standing on my doorstep to threaten me (The Secret Diary of a Call Centre).

Interview 21, ‘Luisa’ (in response to ‘funniest call centre moment’): Having an elderly Welsh gentleman call in and tell me he was playing with this “pride and joy” (The Secret Diary of a Call Centre).

Here, as noted, many of the answers participants provided to the online survey touch on some of the most common issues and experiences of call center workers, including (but not limited to) bullying and emotional abuse, sexual harassment, resistance, the tension between providing customer service and being efficient, the importance of colleagues, as well as the general stress involved in working in this industry.

¹⁸¹ Similarly, Anna, noted that although she did not make use of the mute button herself—out of fear that it would not work and then customers would hear everything she was saying—it was used by others so that they could complain about clients. In fact, she asserts, ‘I think that was pretty much the only reason [the mute button] was used’ (Interview, Anna, 2014). Layla and Gabrielle also mentioned that they (and their coworkers) used the mute button on occasion to vent, or talk to coworkers, while on calls (Interviews, 2014). Sarah noted ‘putting customers on hold unnecessarily’ as tactic (Interview, 2014).

In addition to worker blogs, online discussion forums can also provide workers a much-needed space to try and seek out advice and information about the risks and benefits (or even the potential for) collective organization within the industry (or to just share their everyday experiences). One striking example of this can be seen with a 2008 post by an Ontario-based transnational call center worker—who identified themselves (rather aptly as) *enemy_of_capital*—on *rabble.ca*'s forum discussion page (*babble.ca*).¹⁸²

Enemy_of_capital originally posted the following inquiry:

I work at a call center in Mississauga [Ontario] that fields calls for a U.S. Cell phone provider, among other call in companies based in the U.s. [sic] and Canada. I have found that we are treated rather poorly with random deductions from our checks (supposed “hours missed) and continually rising hours of work and little prospects for a raise and almost nil job security. I want to organize the work place as it is ripe for it (people seem to be game) but I’ve never done this befor [sic] I attempted to email out the relevant unions and federations of labour and got not response. Suggestions from those who know better than I? (October 2008, 2008, *babble.ca*).

After posting, this message, several replies followed. Here is a sample of some of the responses received¹⁸³:

¹⁸² As noted, *babble.ca* is the discussion forum associated within *rabble.ca*. As outlined on their website, ‘*rabble.ca* was built on the efforts of progressive journalists, writers, artists and activists across the country. We launched *rabble* on April 18, 2001 [...] Our Mission? “*rabble.ca* will draw on the real energy and power of the Internet—passionate, engaged human beings. Blurring the line between readers and contributors, it will provide a needed space for issues, a place to explore political passions and an opportunity to expand ideas”’ (*rabble.ca/about/landing*, emphasis in original).

¹⁸³ For the full thread related to *enemy_of_capital*'s original post see:

<http://rabble.ca/babble/labour-and-consumption/organizing-outsourced-call-center>.

Triciamarie (October 18, 2008): There's a story in "Our Times" labour magazine¹⁸⁴ from February this year about a call centre that successfully organized in BC. They worked on contracts too.

quote [from the article]: This was a third-party call-centre, where they contract work from major corporations which they call "projects." Individual employees work pretty much exclusively on a particular project. As organizers we tried to focus on small inside committees from each project. There were some very dedicated inside committee members who saw the benefit of bringing a union in.

This was a very anti-union employer. The market for this kind of work is strictly driven by outside contracts, so the rate of pay is governed by the market and, when you're competing with workers in Indonesia and India and other parts of the world where wages are significantly lower, that's what's continually thrown at the workers. They say, "We can flip a switch and all your calls will go to Indonesia where we only pay a dollar an hour or a day, so there's that constant threat.

http://www.ourtimes.ca/Talking/printer_68.php

The biggest problem with organizing a lot of these kinds of places is the high turnover; the call centre in this story was looking at 90% turnover a year. Frankly that's why it can be hard to spark much of an interest from the big unions.

Triciamarie (October 19, 2008): In the interim it may also be worth your while checking out the Workers Action Centre, a community resource for non-unionized, low-paid workers. They have a telephone inquiry line to answer employment-related questions. They might have some suggestions for you and your coworkers about getting paid what you're owed.

<http://www.workersactioncentre.org/htm>

There are also some bulletins on the website you could distribute or post anonymously. Careful though, because outside of a formal organizing drive, you're not protected from recrimination by the employer. The employer will have you in their sights if they clue into what you're doing.

Enemy_of_capital [October 19, 2008, in response to Triciamarie's post about the 'Our Times' article]: This is dead on I'm afraid. I am organizing a guerilla town hall when a large number of us are not working and trying to organize the whole thing off premises I think, but is it legal?

¹⁸⁴ See Bachand and Anderson (2007-2008).

Doug (October 19, 2008): You certainly can do it—just don't expect any miracles. Call centres are an extremely competitive business because it can be done just about anywhere in the world and it's easy for companies needing those services to shop around for the best deal. This has a big effect, even with a union in place. My employer has that rare thing, unionized call centres. It also outsources a portion of that work to a call centre provider in India. On a day-to-day basis, that call centre is almost more trouble than it's worth—customers don't like it and they don't do the quality of work one would hope for. They are, however, cheap—costing per call around a fifth of what the local call centres do. It shouldn't take a genius then to realize why recent collective agreements have been less than generous to the call centre workers.

Munroe (October 31, 2008): I had involvement in the organising drive referred to in *Our Times*. It was a tough, lengthy and expensive matter. The Collective Agreement now in place for more than a year is not the best money wise, but the presence of the Union has brought dignity and respect to the workplace. In Ontario, I know that Steel has made an attempt similar to ours at a call centre in Thunder Bay. No idea whether they are still interested. (babble.ca).

Here, by posting the original inquiry, and engaging in subsequent discussion with other posters to the thread, the anonymous worker was able to gather valuable information about the process (and possibilities) of collective organization, as well as learn from the experiences of others within the call center industry who had made similar moves to organize. Along with building friendships and informal worker networks within the call center (which I discuss in more detail below), these online spaces offer workers in the industry an important avenue to share their experiences, bond over common issues and problems, and to potentially challenge (whether in an individualized way, or possibly a collective manner) unfair and unjust conditions and policies within the workplace; as such can be seen as a modern update to the established feminist tactic of engaging in 'consciousness-raising groups' (Campbell and Wasco 2000, pp.784-785). While Richards—in his review of literatures concerned with employee internet use—notes that '...it is fair to say that we just do not know how certain groups, such as employees, have

faired in the internet age, especially as the internet age (1990s onward) is also defined by a period of significant decline in traditional collectivised employee activities related to trade union memberships, collective bargaining and strike action' (2012, pp.22-23)¹⁸⁵, the forum discussion noted above suggests that the internet (in particular, worker blogs and discussion forums) provide a valuable space for employee interaction and engagement (and potentially organization). Within the highly feminized call center industry—which I argue, is accompanied by a feminization of resistance practices, with everyday forms of action becoming the norm—these outlets carry the potential to create larger change, and importantly, encourage collective action (although again, it is important to highlight the difficulty, although not impossibility, of doing so).

v. Drug and Alcohol Use During and After Work

This form of action is perhaps one of the more contentious included in the typology—as a case can be made these the use of substances on work property, during work time, is merely a negative (and potentially harmful) consequence of working in this type of high stress, high pressure environment. However, one can also make the case that by consuming these substances on the job, workers are reclaiming work time, and also,

¹⁸⁵ Richards does note that there has been work done within the field of industrial relations looking at the relationship between the internet and possible worker organization (2012, p.28). Although, the focus, as he presents it, seems to be on 'union revitalisation' (Richards 2012, p.28) and the potential role that the internet could play in achieving this, rather than how an employee might go about using the internet to gain the information, resources, and connections needed to pursue unionization. In short, the ways in which the internet could be utilized to mobilize workers is presented from the position of the union, rather the worker (Richards 2012, pp.32-33)—although, he does mention 'a new and novel form of industrial action [...] a "strike" conducted in *Second Life* (Blackadder, 2007) (Richards 2012, p.33, emphasis in original).

potentially impairing their ability to perform as the caring, concerned customer care agent. There is an existing body of literature that examines employees' use of alcohol and drugs, and the links between this behavior and gender, race, age, and a host of other intersectional 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303; Frone 2008a; Frone 2008b; Gleason et al. 1991; Ames and Rebhun 1996). Alcohol and drug use has been found to be a highly gendered (Ames and Rebhun 1996, p.1649; Frone 2008b, p.525). As Ames and Rebhun note, 'national and localized surveys indicate that while employed men generally drink more heavily and frequently than employed women, women's drinking rates increased with certain types of employment' (1996, p.1649). Further, Yagil notes that, in response to abuse and harassment at the hands of customers, service employees may 'use [...] alcohol, cigarettes, and to a lesser extent drugs before starting work' (2008, p.148). Below, I discuss instances of alcohol and drug use by both male and female call center employees. Overall, as Frone notes, this 'past research has primarily explored substance use and impairment in the workforce, which largely reflects use and impairment away from an employed individual's normal work hours. In contrast, little research has focused on alcohol and illicit drug use in the workplace even though such information is important to employers and policymakers' (2008b, p.520). Employee alcohol and drug use—both before, during, and after scheduled shifts—came up across several interviews, in some cases as a way to temporarily escape work duties (with some participants even explicitly describing this behavior as a form of resistance). Thus, again, while it is certainly more problematic than the other forms of action noted in the rest of the typology—given its potentially negative impacts on employees' lives—I have included it

here because of this. Although, its categorization as resistance is perhaps less cut and dry than the others.

One participant, Ben, noted that,

There was one other workplace resistance that I didn't mention, which I only just recalled, and that was drug and alcohol use during...during the...during work hours. They...a lot of people would do it. And, some surveys that was a offence, and other surveys that was permissible, as long as you got your completes. The 'Company A' people, if you had to, if you got your completes and you needed to be high while you got them that was okay (Interview, Ben, 2014).

Similarly, Gabrielle noted that several of her male coworkers would use illegal drugs while at work—and would do so openly. As she explains,

I know that this sounds silly, but at [one call center where I worked] I had a couple of guys who used to deal with their frustrations with their supervisor by going out back and getting stoned and then coming back to work. And that's how they did it. And it was obvious. Like, we all knew, he knew, everybody around us knew, but there's nothing that the supervisor could've done, they were still doing their jobs, and doing them well. So some people were more upfront about the resistance (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014).

Moira also noted that she would both drink and get high while on the job. As she details,

I was...I would say, drinking and smoking weed [during work hours]. Like I was intoxicated for most of the time that I was at work. [...] After several, you know, I was alright, I would say that I was a model employee for the first few months, like several months, but then after about the halfway point, it was unbearable. Yeah. [...] We had a big group of people who would do that. [...] [It would happen during] breaks and lunchtime, and because we started at 3:00, beforehand as well (Interview, Moira, 2014).

Additionally, Moira explained that, ‘we’d have a break [...], it was about a half an hour break but there was a pub across the street so me and my two girlfriends would go and have a pint or something like that. And then you would go back and do the exact same thing...’ (Interview, Moira, 2014). These examples suggest that there is perhaps a link between this type of work and drinking, especially with colleagues, on a regular basis. In fact, as Ames and Rebhun note, ‘some researchers are turning their attention to the penumbra at work: the time that workers spend off the job but with their fellow workers. This time is especially important in alcohol related behavior, when workers drink together during lunch, before or after work, or in non-work related social situations’ (1996, p. 1656).

vi. Humour as Resistance

Another popular form of everyday resistance present within the call center workplace is the use of humour and jokes. As Koch-Schulte noted in her study, ‘workers often exercise defiance through muttered comments and shared jokes. Complaints, jokes and rumours are used both to relieve stress and to respond covertly to managerial and supervisory practices. Complaints are often directed to particular supervisors, and specific programs, but vocal employees may be fired or laid off’ (2002, p.157). She continues, highlighting that, ‘not infrequently, group political actions, such as walkouts, begin with directly voiced complaints’ (Koch-Schulte 2002, p.157)—which speaks to central importance of paying attention to these seemingly mundane and apolitical occurrences and interactions. Although, Barnes (2004, p.133) suggests that the use of humour (along with other

everyday actions) ‘illustrate the blurring of the boundaries between resistance and accommodation.’

Several participants in my study commented on the presence of humour within the otherwise stressful call center workplace. For example, when asked if there was a lot of joking around during the workday at the call center where he was employed Ben replied that,

are you kidding? This is the wealth of everything. Like, for instance, you would...there was someone on staff who start[ed] collecting answering machine messages. And when you were calling San Francisco you got some pretty strange ones. There would be...there was one I remember about a man describing exactly what he was going to do with you. Oh yes. That’s, you know...that’s gold. [...] He [my co-worker] would call them, he would listen to them and he’d write them down (Interview, Ben, 2014).

Moira also noted that one of her coworkers would make fun of customers, and the different ways that they approached the customer service interactions over the phone. As she explains,

the guy, the smartass guy, he would make fun of the customers, and it was like a prototype of different types of customers that you would deal with. Yeah, like, archetypes, basically. [...] I think it’s generally true. People approach this situation...the same situation in cat...in different ways that it can be categorized. Like, they’ll be really nice and try and get what they want, or they’ll be really aggressive and try to get what they want, or they’ll be sad... (Interview, Moira, 2014).

Further, Gabrielle stated that the workers at one of the call centers where she worked would make fun of customers, as well as management. As she details,

you’d make fun of everyone. You’d make fun of...you know, oh, we used to come up with names for the manager. I can’t remember what they were now, but

they were great, along the lines of like dictatorships, and like all sorts of wonderful names. And you'd make fun of, you know, your customers that were ridiculous and, you know, each other and how they act on calls (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014).

While the examples provided above are not aimed at challenging or undermining the authority of workplace superiors—with the notable exception of Gabrielle, and her coworkers, who likened their manager to a dictator—it does serve to show the importance of the use of humour within the workplace as a way to manage the high degree of stress involved in the emotionally demanding work of being a call center agent. However, again, as Koch-Schulte makes clear, 'jokes are used for political purposes and just for lively communication' (2002, p.157). Here she details the various uses and experiences of humour within her study:

For Lana, jokes made work fun: "We have a hoot at work. We e-mail funny little things to each other." But humour would be regulated in the same workplace: Lana would describe management reprimands for inappropriate laughter. Jokes could function as pointed barbs aimed at management tactics: Melissa explains how motivational strategies would be dismantled: "Big banners that they has at the back of the office...said 'Trust, Quality, Commitment, Education' (laughter)...I would joke, 'Trust, Quality, Commitment, Liberation of the Proletariat.'" Jokes may minimize the authoritative role of the manager: Donald relates how an enthusiastic supervisor was the target of jokes: "We are cynical enough to know he was just a 'newbie' [inexperienced]" (Koch-Schulte 2002, p.157).

As noted in the previous section, Murphy (1998) also made note of such tactics within the highly feminized flight attendant profession. In particular, she details the use of humour as a way for flight attendants to challenge and problematize recently changed guidelines which required them to serve pilots before passengers, in order to avoid them becoming 'dehydrated' (Murphy 1998, p.511-514). The comments made by flight attendants to pilots, Murphy notes, ultimately served to undercut and challenge the gendered

hierarchical relationship between the feminized flight attendant and the masculine pilot, and demonstrate the political power that ‘jokes’ can have within the workplace (Murphy 1998, p.513). Thus, humour within the workplace, depending on the context and motivation, can serve as a crucial tool to openly challenge existing power structures.

‘as long as we live in a gendered world, workers’ struggles will be gendered to some degree. Gender mediates our relations, both within and between classes, inside and outside the workplace. As well, in their day-to-day dealings, men and women construct, and give meaning to, class and gender, as structure, ideology, and culture.’

-Pamela Sugiman 1992, p.24.¹⁸⁶

5.2. Typology Category B: Distinctly Gendered Everyday Forms of Feminized Resistance

In the previous section I outlined and briefly discussed various feminized forms of everyday resistance. In this section, I outline several forms of feminized everyday resistance that I view as being distinctly gendered. While the forms of action outlined in the first section can be pursued by both male and female workers within the transnational call center industry— and which manifest as a result of the lack of opportunities for collective resistance, and those which are similarly of an everyday nature—the actions I outlined here (while still not necessarily gender specific) hold greater significance when undertaken by women workers, given their positionality within the global economy, as well society in general.

¹⁸⁶ While Sugiman’s (1992) study focuses on women workers’ collective resistance within the United Autoworkers Union, this statement also refers to women workers’ resistance that is more individualized and everyday in nature (such as the practices I explore throughout this dissertation).

i. Withdrawing Emotional Labour, or Refusing to ‘Smile Down the Line’¹⁸⁷

The ‘withdrawal of emotional labour’ by workers when interacting with customers is a crucial, highly gendered, form of everyday resistance utilized by workers within the call center industry (Mulholland 2004, pp. 716-717¹⁸⁸; Russell 2009, p. 237). Here workers minimized their ‘personalized’ interactions with customers, and instead opted to ‘follow the sales script and simply act out the sales function’ (Mulholland 2004, p.717). In effect they refused to ‘smile down the line’ (Russell 2009, p. 4; Bonds 2006, p.37; Belt et al. 2002, p.21). One of the former call center workers interviewed recalled an incident where a coworker withheld their emotional labour from a customer, but in much more confrontational manner, which obviously presented additional risks to that worker. As Patricia explains,

There was one person [a male coworker] that took a call and basically just handled it really, really inappropriately. And he was, it was kind of a mutual, like he [my coworker] was getting fired, and he was quitting at the same time, like the next day [...] The woman [the client] was, I don’t know what the scenario was, there was something that she needed and she was being impatient about how things were happening or something and he made some comment about, like did he need...did she need him to change her diaper too, or something like that, or something involving a diaper. It was pretty bad (Interview, Patricia, 2014).

Here, it is telling that the worker who was withholding the emotional labour—and in a very brazen way—was a man. Patricia’s male colleague felt that the risk of losing his job

¹⁸⁷ Russell (2009).

¹⁸⁸ Although, it should be noted that in addition to the everyday practices outlined, there was also a union presence within the ‘PhoneCo’ workplace (Mulholland 2004).

as a result openly insulting a customer was not enough to detract him from doing so (in fact, it seems that he may have even have had plans to quit). However, while such an open and flagrant outburst may have been an option for him (for reasons we do not know), such an open display would not be an option for other female call center workers (such as those discussed later by another participant John) who relied on their jobs because of their familial responsibilities.

Sarah also noted that when she was dealing with particularly frustrated customers, she would sometimes pass those call on to her supervisor. As she explains,

...in some cases like, you know, sort of, in...not instigating, but when a customer...when I could tell a customer was extremely frustrated we had ways of diffusing some of that frustration by passing them on to a supervisor. And so if I felt like a customer was like really getting on my...like really getting on my nerves and pushing me then I would just...like, I wouldn't even think twice [inaudible] passing them to my supervisor. And at a couple of points I, I was questioned by my supervisor as to why I was passing those calls because the customer really wasn't that angry with them. And I would always just say that well they were, they were really angry with me and I didn't want to risk saying something that would get me, you know, get me in trouble, so I just would've preferred that the manager, you know, deal with the problem and would pass that...the potentially problematic phone calls off of...get them off my plate before things got really out of hand (Interview, Sarah, 2014).

Actions such as these can be seen as particularly significant because, as Mulholland asserts, 'although call centre workers are restricted to voice contact with customers, the manner in which they manage customer conversation shows the different ways emotional labour remains critical to profitability in the service sector, while presenting workers with new opportunities to resist' (2004, p.716). In addition to carrying the potential to impact company profits, when either male or female call center workers refuse to perform the

requisite emotional labor associated with the industry it serves to challenge the transnational trope of the caring call center agent (and as such represents an important form of feminized resistance). Although, when women workers are the ones refusing to play the courteous call center representative, in particular, the gendered assumptions made by employers about the skills involved in this type of work are problematized (and such refusals represent an important, and distinctly gendered, form of feminized resistance). Indeed, my research consistently showed that when women workers refuse to ‘smile down the line’ it troubles the notion that women are inherently suited for this type of labor, and shines a light on the skills that are actually involved in doing this type of work. By contrast, male indiscretions—of the kind detailed in the above quotation—serve in many ways to simply reinforce gender stereotypes concerning men’s greater propensity toward disruptive behaviors at work.¹⁸⁹ And further, examples such as this also serve to highlight the greater freedom that most male workers have to behave in this manner within the workplace—a freedom that women workers within the global economy are rarely afforded, for a variety of gendered reasons.

Although, interestingly, in certain cases, the expression of true empathy and emotion on the part of the call center agent can prove to be a form of resistance—not a resistance against the trope of the always-caring call center agent, but against imperatives within the industry as a whole that at the same time assert the need for workers to appear caring, and compassionate toward customers (in most, but not all, call centers), while also

¹⁸⁹ Thank you to Juanita Elias for this point.

emphasizing, above all else, the need to maintain short call times. For example, as Moira noted during her interview,¹⁹⁰

M: ...there was one guy who...he called...it was really interesting, actually...he called me from Hawaii. And he was a guy who had used all of his money to...put on his credit card to buy the trip to Hawaii to commit suicide.

SR: Oh wow, and he told you all this?

M: He was super lonely, he was like a lonely guy, and he was, when he was talking to me, he was walking along the beach on his cell phone, which would have cost him a lot of money, but yeah, that's what he was doing and I remember thinking like this...I, I have to, like my company's policy dictates that I have to hang up on this guy, and, and he's calling a credit card company, you know, to talk to them as like the last human voice, you know that he's going to hear before he decides to commit suicide or not.

SR: So was he calling for that purpose, or was there, like, something related to debt, something why he was calling, or he just wanted a voice on the phone?

M: I couldn't figure it out. He did start talking about his debt, but then, you know, all this other stuff came up too, so.

SR: So you don't really ever know what happened?

M: No, but that was an example of the gamble that I took because I ended up talking to him for quite a long period of time and I didn't care if it was being recorded or not, because...

SR: Did you mention the incident to your supervisor to say like, "hey, this is what happened, I was on a call longer than usual"?

M: No.

SR: Wow, I wasn't expecting to hear that.

M: Yeah that was probably the most interesting call that I ever got.

¹⁹⁰ Interestingly, Moira (who worked for a credit services call center) noted during the interview that, contrary to many call center workplaces, she was not encouraged to portray an emotional investment towards customers, rather she was provided scripts to deal with various possible issues that might come up during calls, which she noted, 'encouraged robot-ness.' (Interview, 2014).

Here we see that through her decision to stay on the call with the suicidal customer, despite the constant pressure to keep call times short, Moira confronts one of the main contradictions and tensions of this type of service work: the need to care (or at least appear that you care), while not actually being provided the time by employers, in many cases, to actually provide good customer service or care. Thus, in refusing to be limited by the pressure to have short call times, Moira resisted the way call center labour is organized, even though, in this case, it was to be caring and helpful (skills that are problematically associated with women workers) to a customer in need. Therefore, we see an example of everyday resistance against which challenges aspects of the way that call center labour is structured, while potentially leaving the problematic assumptions around gendered skill unchallenged.

ii. Quitting as a Gendered Resistance Strategy

High turnover is a notable feature of the call center industry as a whole (Koch-Schulte 2002, p.158). Here, it is important to highlight the importance of workers' (often gendered) decisions to leave. As Koch-Schulte asserts, 'quitting can be a powerful act of resistance that may have consequences for the way workers negotiate job conditions' (2002, p.158). Although the choice to quit working at a call center is more difficult for some, given personal economic considerations. As John highlighted, the workers he saw stay at the call center the longest were women, because they had a family to support. As he explains in more depth,

...the guys, like we started as like a group, like we got hired as like a 20 person, like, group, and that's...and we went through training together. And by the end of it, I would say, like, by the end of my time there, like most of the guys had left, but the women were still working there. And of the women who seemed to like enjoy it, or strive, or planned to stay for [a] long time, they were like the few like, 35, 40 year old women who you know has at least one or two kids, they have one or two kids at home, and a husband who also works. So they were like newer immigrants, and things like this. So it seemed like, the young guys would just like fuck off and go work in a warehouse, or something. Like, it was just like, you couldn't take it anymore, right [...] it was oppressive (Interview, John, 2014).¹⁹¹

In discussing gender and the division of labour between 'capitalist production' and 'human reproduction,' Acker notes that 'women have been subordinate in both domains, held responsible for unpaid reproductive labor and consigned to positions with less power and lower pay than men within the sphere of production' (2004, p.23). She continues, 'men, unburdened by reproduction responsibilities and already the major wielders of power, built the factories and the railroads, and managed the developing capitalist enterprises' (Acker 2004, p.23). Here, while John and his young male colleagues are employed within the same precarious industry as the women around him, their ability to resist—including their ability to quit—is much more extensive as they do not hold the same familial responsibilities (although this is of course not to say that all female and male call center agents are in similar positions). Thus, along with gender, age, family roles and responsibilities, as well as potentially 'immigrant status' (Shields 2008,

¹⁹¹ Later in the interview, John expanded on this point further, noting that '...there wasn't a lot of formal union activity. So they didn't do the whole resistance in the classical sense, but it was more like, not just shit talking, but also having the agency to like leave, when you want, especially when you're young. [inaudible] Like, I don't need this job anyway, at least I'm not some person who's stuck here. So there was like comparing one against the oth...like yourself against others, that made us feel better and resist the, you know, the man basically is what it was' (Interview, 2014).

p.306)¹⁹² can be seen to influence the forms of resistance workers undertake in this context.

Another participant that I interviewed quit because of being repeatedly sexually harassed within the workplace. As Sarah explains,

I know that I always felt weird because I was one of the only women working in technical support which made me feel uncomfortable, and obviously, it became uncomfortable because of, like, the types of people that were, you know, like really older men, were like making passes at me and stuff and it just made me feel really uncomfortable. Because at the same time there's nowhere you can go. I mean, like, spatially, you are at a...you're sharing a big, long desk, with somebody else, and unfortunately the guy that I was sharing the desk with was one of these, like, incessant old men that like to make a lot of passes. And so, there was nowhere I could even go, right, I mean, it's not even like I could get up and move to another desk. And actually, I did request a move from him and they moved me behind...like there's nowhere to go...so, I mean, they moved me from sharing a desk with him to like, sitting behind him, with our backs facing each other, you know what I mean. So like there was no... there was like...spatially, you're really constrained and so obviously it was really uncomfortable because I was also the youngest woman that was working there [...] ...*the men workers, that I worked with were...like one in particular, is the reason I quit*, because there was just so much daily sexual harassment, [comments] about me wanting, if I wanted to go on dates with them, or that I was this, or that I was that like all the time, right, and there was...and because you didn't feel affinity with your managers, because you just felt like your managers were there to, you know, tell you you were not doing it fast enough, not doing it good enough, these were all the problem, I felt like that there was nobody I could even talk to about this incident with this, with this coworker and so just one day I just got up and left, I mean, I didn't even tell anybody that I was leaving because it was just...I felt like there was, there was absolutely no outlet for me to even begin to express the problems, right. And I thought I'll go, like I would work anywhere else than here, right. So, I just got up and put my badge in my desk and left.
(Interview, Sarah, 2014, emphasis added).¹⁹³

¹⁹² While John's comment does seem to suggest that the fact the women workers he was referring to were recent immigrants to Canada, it is difficult to discern what impact—if any—this may have had on their decisions to quit working at the call center or not (and whether, or in what ways, that felt they could resist within workplace) without talking to them to gain their direct perspective.

She continues, explaining the persistent experience of sexual harassment within the call center workplace:

It was just, so it was more of a...of being...it just started off with being really uncomfortable because he would always make comments about what I was wearing, or tell me that it looked really nice or...and so there was just these general comments about what, what I was wearing or how my hair as done, or what I looked like, but then the comments became—and so I would just like, because I'm a non-confrontational person I would just like laugh it off, or, or say thank you, like some people...maybe he's just being kind, or whatever—and then, then the comments started becoming a lot more personalized, and a lot more sexualized. So he would tell me that he had had a dream about me, or that he was talking to another coworker about me, and that they thought that I was, whatever, the best looking among the...all the group of men (I mean, that was a great compliment)! Or, and then one day, I think about, like there was like a particular comment about my butt and, and so like all of these more sexualized comments started coming up because obviously he was getting a lot more comfortable. I had been working there for like two months at this point and so those kind of offhanded comments...and I didn't work with him every day, so every time I worked with him he made a comment, but I worked with him maybe like three or four, maybe three, times a week, let's say, and then it got to the point where every time I was coming in to my shift, or leaving a shift, and we would run into each other he would be asking for my phone number, he would be asking me to go out. He would be just always, always, always saying something to me. And so, because I just didn't want to deal it with it anymore, and I didn't feel like I had a good enough relationship with my supervisor, or with management to even talk

¹⁹³ After quitting abruptly, Sarah explained that, '...I remember being harassed by them [the call center] after I had even worked there, like I got phone calls from them saying that I had to come back into work, threatening me that I wouldn't get my vacation pay if I didn't come back into work because I couldn't just get up and leave because there was sensitive contract information that I had been given, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And that happened for about a week after and then obviously they stopped, right, because, see the problem is that on the [computer company] French [speaking] side there's nobody, like it's a different sort of labour...let's say, labour reserve, not everybody can work there and so when they lose somebody it's not like they can like, I mean, it's not like they can't just pull anybody off the street, and so when you leave, you actually leave them in like a difficult spot and so like I think that harassment was to try, to try and convince me that I needed to go back to work. That I was in someway obligated to go back to work for them because they didn't have anybody else to replace me at that time, and so they all had to take on extra shifts to be able to cover the, cover the loss, right' (Interview, Sarah, 2014).

about these things, I just left. [...] I didn't even explain the motives behind [asking for] the move [away from him at work]. Right, I just said that...I think...and I actually think I lied about the motives because I think I told them that he was being distracting, right, because I also felt bad about him because I knew that it was his only source of employment. I knew that he was on...like he was on disability. I knew that there was like a lot of barriers, that he needed this job and that's why he'd been there so long and so I didn't also want him to get...like I always felt this like sympathy for him...that I didn't want him to get in trouble. And so, at the end of the...like when I asked for the move and then they just moved me behind him and so nothing changed and at the end of the day, I made the decision to sacrifice myself and that job than to potentially sacrifice his position because I knew that it was a secondary income for me because I was working at another job and that, let's say, that I wasn't going to work there the rest of my life. So I didn't want to have to feel like I had, you know, made somebody lose their job. Not that he would've even lost his job because they...I don't think there was any attempt, any proactive attempt, for them to minimize those sorts of things. But I didn't want to feel like I would've been responsible for him being reprimanded, or losing his bonus, or whatever, because of me (Interview, Sarah, 2014).

Again, Sarah made it very clear during the interview that the repeated sexual harassment that she experienced from her male coworkers was the primary reason that she quit working at the call center, even though working there, in general, was a less than pleasant experience. As she states,

...none of the things that my managers ever did to me were enough to push me to quit, right, I mean all of those impositions were annoying and frustrating and stressful, but at the end of the day, the reason I quit is 'cause I couldn't handle the...the one coworker anymore, the sexual harassment stuff. I mean, all the other, sort of, crappy day to day I just took as part of the job. Right, I mean, I just kept justifying it as this is what I signed on for. I mean, you know, I'm helping people fix their broken computers, how happy are they going to be about it? (Interview, Sarah, 2014, emphasis added).

Sarah's experiences—and her ultimate decision to leave the job because of this—fits with Gettman and Gelfand's assertion that 'professional women who are harassed by their clients have lower job and health satisfaction, experience more psychological stress, feel

less attached to their organizations on an affective level, and spend more time thinking about quitting' (2007, p.765). Although, here it should be noted that they were not referencing the experiences of women in call centers, however, their findings do appear to be relevant in this context as well.

Further, as Smyth and Grijns highlight in their study of the 'everyday' resistance practices of women manufacturing workers in Indonesia, 'labour turnover is a gendered "weapon" of resistance' (1997, p.21). This is because, as they note, the women employed in this industry have a hard time balancing their paid and unpaid labour responsibilities, and therefore are more likely than male workers to leave the workforce after a short time (Smyth and Grijns 1997, p.21). Although, the gendered nature of this form of resistance is important in the case of call center workers—the majority of which are women—this did not appear to be a primary motivator for women workers to leave their positions. In fact, as John's comment above highlights, women's familial responsibilities actually served as central motivator to stay at the call center, despite the less than desirable work environment. However, this is not to say that quitting does not represent a distinctly gendered form of feminized resistance, in line with Smyth and Grijns' assertion—I argue it does—because, in the case of call centers, women workers, such as Sarah, may feel they have no other option than to quit to escape persistent and repeated experiences of workplace sexual harassment. Thus, while 'voting with your feet' (Scott 1985, p.245) has long been a strategy utilized by workers to express their discontent, within the call center setting, it can take on particularly gendered significance (in ways that differ from those documented by Smyth and Grijns).

iii. Friendships and Informal Knowledge Networks as Resistance

When participants were asked what, if anything, they enjoyed about working at the call center(s) where they were employed, the most common answer—regardless of gender—was the coworkers that they spent time with during the workday. Coworkers form friendships and important informal support and knowledge networks within the call center workplace, despite employer efforts to undermine these connections and socialization (e.g. constant surveillance, seating plans). Through these networks workers gained support within a difficult and emotionally demanding work environment, but also, in many cases, crucially learn various valuable forms of action (from shortcuts to more blatant ways to undercut company). Again, this speaks to Scott's 'venerable popular culture of resistance' (1989, p.35),

Another way in which these informal knowledge networks paid off was in coming up with collective ways of handling repeated sexual harassment at the hands of particular male coworkers. As the excerpt from my interview included below demonstrates, when female workers in the call center where Moira worked were unable to report (or perceived that would be unable to report) cases of sexual harassment within the workplace, they came up with a solution on their own on how to deal with the offender:

M: ...there was one guy on our team that was really creepy like to the other women, and [...] the people who had been there for longer knew how to add a chat function to our computers so we could chat with each other. [...] Yeah, so once you were in, kind of like in the crew then you knew how to do that, to chat

with each other. But he would always send like really creepy messages and stuff like that so, the women on my team, I would say, I would call it now looking back organizing, to kind of take a stand against what he was doing, which was great, because we wouldn't have been able to do that alone. But, we ended up talking about, it just came up in conversation, he was doing the same thing to all of us, so, yeah, we responded in the same way.

SR: So, with the chat function was that something that supervisors and management wouldn't be able to see [...]?

M: No, it was recorded. [...] but nobody really...it was like a, from what I understood anyway, it was a relic from the past, that they hadn't taken off of the computers, so nobody really checked it. The records would still be kept, somewhere. They had access to it if they wanted to.

SR: Okay, but you guys, sort of, accepted that it, that it would be fairly uncommon for them to go back and actually look at what was being discussed through the function?

M: Yeah, unless like someone, you know, sometimes managers would walk around and stuff like that, so when they were doing that you were not allowed, like it was an unspoken rule you're not allowed to use chat function. If they see it on someone else's computer, then they'll know that everybody has access to it. Yeah.

SR: So the people that sort of let you in on that secret, did they sort of clearly say, you know, you have to be careful about how you're using this, and you have to keep this, sort of, on the down low...?

M: Yeah, that's why you had to be in before you got to hear it.

SR: How long was it, do you remember, before you were part of the in the in crowd to get access?

M: I'd say like two months. Yeah.

SR: Okay. So definitely a considerable period before...?

M: Yeah.

S: Okay. The second thing I was wondering, because you mentioned, and maybe we can talk about this a little bit more if you want when, we come back to sexual harassment, but you said that the guy on your team was saying or doing creepy things, or using this chat function for creepy purposes, and I'm wondering if you could just say a bit more about that.

M: Oh, he liked to talk about this penis a lot [...] Yeah, and how he had an erection, and like what kind of, like fantasies he had about you and, just ask you out for like after work and stuff.

SR: Okay and you're saying that this was happening, or he was saying these things, or, ...through this chat function to a lot of the other...

M: Yeah.

SR: ...other women on your team?

M: Except for one and I don't know why it wasn't her because he definitely seemed interested in her, but he didn't say those things to her.

SR: That's interesting.

M: Yeah.

SR: So, and this came up in conversation between you and the other women?

M: Yeah.

SR: And you said something about being able to deal with that issue like collectively?

M: Yeah.

SR: I'm wondering if you could talk a bit about how you did that.

M: We just decided that you know that was horrible and that we should, every single person should give him the same response which would be, you know, cold shoulder basically. Yeah, like you're disgusting and I don't want to talk to you.

SR: And did you find it helpful or reassuring to just be able to talk about it with other women that were going through that [...] having to deal with him as well?

M: I felt like, reassuring? I felt horrified that he was doing it to more people than just me, but it did feel good to have, other people have my back.

SR: [after a short break in interview because of background noise in the venue where we met for the interview]... You were talking about the collective ways that you and the other women dealt with the sexual harassment by that one guy, that sort of creepy guy on your team and I thought that was interesting, when you were talking about, being sort of horrified, and actually acknowledging how widespread the problem was, like, when you guys were taking as a group...

M: I was not as aware back then, or I guess I didn't understand all of my different experiences of sexual harassment as that.

SR: Did any of...did you, or any of the women on your team ever say anything to your supervisor about [M: no] that guy in particular?

M: No, he was like the star of the team, so there's no way that you could say anything about it (Interview, Moira, 2014).

Moira's account speaks to collective, venerable popular culture of resistance (a popular culture, which in this case, is most definitely gendered), that Scott's original account of everyday resistance does not account for, or address.¹⁹⁴ And although this type of action is certainly not restricted to only women workers, it does take on a distinctly gendered significance given the motivations and goals behind this form of communication. In fact, in many ways, this can be seen as an updated version of an established feminist practice: consciousness-raising groups. Campbell and Wasco explain that

consciousness-raising groups were a common tactic for organizing during the 1970s women's movement (Faludi, 1991; Sarachild, 1969, 1978). [...] Bringing women together to discuss their lives brings attention to the myriad of ways gender oppression affects the day-to-day experiences of being female. In fact, for many women, it is only through their discussions with other women that they are able to find ways to describe events of their own lives (Sarachild, 1969, 1978) (2000, pp.784-785).

¹⁹⁴ Sugiman (1992, pp.16-17) offers an example of how such networks and friendships can create change within a unionized workplace.

The use of online worker blogs, websites, and chat forums (discussed earlier) by call center workers to describe and vent about their experiences within the industry can also be seen as extension of this feminist practice.¹⁹⁵

However, some scholars, such as Barnes (2004, p. 128), consider such ‘supportive work cultures’ to be accommodation, rather than a form of resistance. Albeit, she asserts that such actions might lead to resistance, noting that ‘common to both resistance and accommodation is the individual’s need to safeguard dignity and self-respect that provides a means of understanding the interplay between the two. Moreover, in exploring ways to cope, accommodation can develop into resistance’ (Barnes 2004, p.134). As Barnes explains further,

The development of supportive work cultures (a form of accommodation and a precursor to resistance) had great potential to foster collectivism at the study sites. Across the sites, 87 percent of CSRs were satisfied or very satisfied with their fellow workers. The interviews suggest that, in spite of shift work or high turnover, CSRs had developed supportive bonds and responded to what was perceived to be unfairness to others. At one site, a CSR pointed out a staff member had been reprimanded for being two minutes late back from lunch. He stated that, although he had never had problems of this sort, he was annoyed that a colleague had been ‘mistreated’ (*Austravel*, Sydney, 2000). As Friedman notes, individual and collective forms of resistance are often complimentary in that individual dissatisfaction may produce a ‘collective expression of sympathy’ (Friedman 1977: 52). The ‘habit of solidarity’ takes time to learn (Friedman 1977: 51) (2004, p.131).¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ See Redden and Terry (2013, pp.246-247) for a similar argument regarding the use of online discussion forums to share problematic experiences during routine airport security screenings.

¹⁹⁶ Kelloway et al. (2010) note that acts of injustice or unfairness towards fellow workers can be a source of ‘deviant behavior’ within the workplace. As they explain, ‘with whom might the individual actor identify? It is possible that he or she engages in counterproductive or deviant workplace behavior to restore a perceived inequity or injustice that is considered to be largely unique or individual. It is also possible that this

Here, however, I maintain this type of action, rather than representing a form of accommodation (or pre-resistance, as Barnes suggests) is very much a form of resistance, as it allows workers—even if in very small ways—to take control of part of the work experience within the call center away from management, who try to control every minute of their lives within this setting. In this sense, worker groups can be seen as a re-appropriation of the workplace experience, and as such, can be seen as a political act. Further, as the example provided by Moira above makes clear, such groups, networks, or friendships—for women, in particular—can provide an important resource to combat everyday experiences of sexual harassment within the call center workplace.

5.3 Further Discussion of Interview Data and the Importance of the FEPGE Approach

Studying acts of resistance, such as those discussed in the previous two sections of this chapter is of the utmost importance as many have the potential to have effects on larger economic processes. As Mulholland highlights, the fact that service workers have ‘direct contact with the market’ (2004, p.714)—which Hochschild referred to as ‘voice-to-voice contact’ (1993, p.333; see also Huws 2009, p.6; Lindgren and Sederblad 2006, p.190)—opens up ‘new opportunities for resistance’ (2004, p.714) that can ‘have an adverse and immediate impact on profitability’ (2004, p.713). This is very much in keeping with

individual would respond because of a perceived injustice targeted toward an individual or group (e.g. work team) with whom he or she does identify. Individually enacted, organizationally targeted counterproductive work behavior would carry a number of potential benefits of the individual, including a sense of restored equity, either through individual gain (as in the case of theft) or organizational harm (as in the case of sabotage)’ (Kelloway et al. 2010, p.22).

Scott's analysis of the everyday acts of resistance undertaken by the Malaysian peasantry, in which he argued that these individual acts (undertaken in an uncoordinated and unplanned way) 'may have aggregate consequences all out of proportion to their banality when considered singly...no adequate account of class relations is possible without addressing their importance' (1989, p.34).¹⁹⁷ Thus, while overt and collective forms of resistance may not be available, or may not represent an effective option even if available, workers can still potentially create changes within the workplace by undertaking small, 'everyday' acts of resistance. And, even beyond the consideration of any potential larger consequences of these everyday worker actions, it is still extremely important to document and acknowledge them, as they hold significance for the workers undertaking them—in particular, by allowing them to reclaim control over, even small, spaces within the highly controlled call center workplace—and more generally, these types of actions provide us with important information about the gendered landscape of worker resistance within the current global political economy. As Gabrielle tellingly explains,

It made me feel more empowered but it also made me feel bad that I had to do it. And so that's, that's kind of where it's at because you feel empowered because you're taking some of the power back and you're finding ways to make it manageable for you, despite the fact that they're trying not to make it manageable for you, despite the fact that they're undermining your own needs and your own capabilities. You're finding a way to push back, which feels good because you have to do it. I mean, it's not even just that you're undermining the culture, it's

¹⁹⁷ In stating this I do not aim to present a 'romanticization of resistance' that is not attentive to 'the complex relations of domination and subordination within which acts of resistance are embedded' (Mirchandani 2004, p.179). Rather, I contend that despite the small and 'everyday' acts of resistance discussed in this dissertation hold the *potential* to create larger changes, and as such they deserve greater attention. Looking at such acts is important because, as Mirchandani explains, 'focus[ing] on the differently located women and men acting in resistance to the barriers they face disrupts notions that global power is inevitable, automatic or even separable from resistance' (2004, p.179).

that call center expectations are impossible. They're, they're literally impossible demands on the human body and brain. Like, it's not...nobody can do it. Nobody can do it all the time, all the way it's supposed to be done. It's not human. So, I mean, when people are willing to give you leeway then...then you feel a little better about it and you still feel like you have some power, you feel like you're recognized as a human being still, and you're not just, you know, a number and a machine, and a this, and so you don't feel as bad, but you feel better when you take back the power, but then you felt worse before, so, you know, it's a strange... [...] you feel more empowered, but you also feel bad that you're in the situation (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014).

Importantly, utilizing an FEPGE approach (outlined in chapter two) allowed me to better focus on the ways that resistance occurs within the transnational call center workplace, and how worker actions and behaviors within this context matter for the broader global economy (whether in terms of constituting the global economy—in their own small way—by continuing to do the everyday work that allows transnational businesses to continue to operate across borders, or in by disrupting the global economy by troubling gendered assumptions about labour, and impacting the profits of the companies employing these workers). Also, as this dissertation serves to demonstrate more broadly—utilizing the FEPGE approach—it is important to highlight and acknowledge the different opportunity structures that are available for different groups of workers—even within the same industry, and even within the same workplace—based on workers' various 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303) such as gender, race, age, as well as a whole host of other intersecting inequalities. As John, one the male interviewees in the study so importantly highlighted, even men and women within the same call center, may have vastly different opportunities for resistance (or a willingness to resist, given differing personal costs to the worker). The types of resistance may also carry different

symbolic significance depending on the person undertaking it as well. In response to being asked about worker turnover, John, a former customer service agent, noted,

Everybody was quitting there, except the ones that wanted to stay. And they, [the ones that wanted to stay]...but they would splinter off and like get together, and like I said it was usually middle-aged women, for some reason, but it was for economic reasons, like it was clear that they had—they're like maybe within five, last five year immigrants—typically Asian or Indian descent and you could tell they're doing it for the money and they, they also were like, I have a job to do and I'm just going to do it. And the whole [...] infrastructure, and the oppressiveness must have been felt by them, because I remember them getting in trouble, like people in that group, getting in trouble for various things and they would take it a lot harder and they would respond more. Whereas *people like me*, and others, who didn't like it there would just like kind of laugh and not worry about it. But we didn't have the same economic burden, like of having a family to support. We were like twenty-one years old, right, so like what do we care? (Interview, John, 2014 emphasis added).

Here, we see an explicit acknowledgement that intersecting 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303) such as gender, race, as well as age, and potentially 'immigrant status' (Shields 2008, p.306) play an important role in structuring and influencing the forms of resistance that are realistically available to particular workers. In particular, John highlights the importance that family responsibilities potentially played in these women's decisions to resist or not (and if so, in what ways would present the least risk to their employment as call center agents). This incidence bears a striking resemblance to the gendered opportunity structures evidenced in Camp's study of slave resistance, in which she notes that women who were slaves had fewer opportunities for resistance for various reasons, including the consideration of family responsibilities (2004, pp.36-38; Camp 2002, pp. 3-4).

The issue of gendered opportunity structures of resistance similarly came up during my interview with Moira:

M: I remember there was one guy who was working in the cubicle next to me, and he...I don't know what it was about him, but his calls, his demeanor would really piss people off, and so he had to hang up a lot. And he had such a loud voice so we knew exactly when he was hanging up because...you just knew.

SR: Did he ever get in trouble for doing that so often that you know of?

M: No, because he was also an extremely...ah, he had been there for a long time and he was a really good salesperson. [...] He was extremely intelligent so he could outsmart the managers in any conversation.

SR: Do you think that he knew that?

M: Yeah, definitely! Oh, yeah.

SR: Do you think that if the roles had been reversed, and he was actually a woman and he did that, do you think he would've been called out the same...or not...do you think they would've been called out for having hung up so many times? Or was it something that wasn't gender related at all?

M: I don't know, *I see most things as gender related, so. I think that he would not have had the confidence to be acting the way that he was acting in the first place if he was there for the reasons that most women are in that position, which is they have a family, you know lack of choice basically.* He knew that he was going to be there for a certain amount of time, like the time that he was going to school and then that's it. [...] No he was saving up money to go to school, that's what it was (Moira, Interview, 2014, emphasis added).

With both John's comments, as well as the account of the actions of Moira's colleague, we see that these workers are subject to different gendered opportunity structures of resistance, based on their relative privilege within the highly racialized and gendered call center industry. And with Moira's comments, she alludes to the fact that perhaps the masculinized sales role was valued more highly than the more feminized customer care role within her call center, and therefore, those workers who excelled at this type of work

may have been given more leeway to more openly resist management.¹⁹⁸ Elias similarly documented that male Malaysian factory workers' resistance was disciplined in a different manner than female factory workers' resistance, due to 'perceptions of female docility' (2005, p.215). In fact, the male workers' actions even led to promotions within the factory, while the women workers remained segregated in the low-paying sewing machinist positions (Elias 2005, p.215). Also, given that neither John, nor Moira's coworker, were burdened by the same economic and familial responsibilities being shouldered by their female coworkers, they were importantly able to treat their employment as flexible and non-permanent (which would have undoubtedly informed their choices of whether or not—or in what ways—to resist). Thus, while all transnational call center workers can undertake feminized everyday forms of worker resistance—regardless of their gender, age, race, etc.—there are certain privileged groups of workers within the industry that are afforded more scope to resist than others (even if only at an everyday level) because of their ability to more easily find alternative employment. This provides a clear example of how through utilizing the FEPGE approach while conducting the interviews with former employees, I was able to gather more nuanced information about the choices surrounding worker resistance practices within the industry, in particular, how individual workers' 'positionalities' (Marchand 2005, p.219) impacted the types of actions that they chose to undertake.

¹⁹⁸ Moira (Interview, 2014) noted that aside from the mostly male managers, all workers were tasked with the same jobs, although, it was mostly men who emphasized their sales skills.

Table 2: Feminized Forms of Everyday Resistance and Distinctly Gendered Forms of Feminized Resistance in the Canadian Transnational Call Center Industry

Feminized Forms of Everyday Resistance	Distinctly Gendered Forms of Feminized Everyday Resistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>creativity as resistance</i> - <i>forms of resistance that (potentially) impact company profits</i> - <i>creative worker avoidance practices</i> - <i>anonymous call center worker blogs and online discussion forums</i> - <i>drug and alcohol use during and after work</i> - <i>humour as resistance</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>withdrawing emotional labour</i> - <i>quitting as a gendered resistance strategy</i> - <i>friendships and informal knowledge networks as resistance</i>

I envision the forms of feminized everyday resistance, as well as the distinctly gendered forms of everyday resistance that were outlined in the previous chapter (see table 2 above), as being positioned along a gendered ‘spectrum of resistance’. Seen in this way, it becomes clearer that workers’ social identities and locations have real impacts on the tactics and strategies that they will have available to them, or be willing to risk using (see diagram 1 below). By presenting—and analyzing—the data in this way, I build on Scott’s conception of a ‘spectrum of resistance’ (Tripp 1997, p.5) by making clear that any such understanding of resistance is gendered. I argue in chapter two, in much the same manner, that all approaches to everyday IPE (including Hobson and Seabrooke’s) must also be attentive the central analytical importance of gender when interrogating the connections between the everyday and international. Further, the case for a gendered spectrum of resistance serves to flesh out earlier accounts of gendered resistance and gendered opportunities of resistance (such as those presented by Camp (2004) and Hart (1991)), by

providing a way for the gendered experiences of resistance to be visualized and mapped, and therefore more clearly acknowledged.

Also, as previously noted, envisioning resistance as non-dichotomous (i.e. either as 'everyday,' or as collective and open resistance), but rather as being situated along this continuum we are able to see how actions such as call center workers' use of everyday tactics can potentially develop in to larger, more open forms of resistance. For example, the call center worker's use of the anonymous online discussion forum 'babble.ca' discussed above can clearly be classified under the heading of 'feminized everyday resistance' (as this resistance was hidden as a result of assuming a pseudonym); however, by looking carefully at the information being sought (and the advice provided by other anonymous users) it is easy to see how this can have the potential to develop into more collective and open forms of worker resistance. Thus, just as Scott (1993, p.94) argued, it would be impossible to have a full understanding of the nature of rebellions without also paying attention to the everyday forms of resistance that serve as the background to these events. In the same way, worker protests, or successful moves to unionize call center workplaces within this context, cannot be understood without also taking a broader view to the types of action that lead up to such expressions of discontent, and open assertion of worker rights.

Diagram 1: The Gendered Spectrum of Worker Resistance within Canadian Transnational Call Centers:

Covert, Individual¹⁹⁹
Forms of Resistance

Overt, Collective
Forms of Resistance



- older women workers' (especially those with families) everyday resistance within the highly feminized call center industry

- potentially restricted by various factors, such as familial responsibilities (which make the cost of potentially losing their job too high)

- young male workers' everyday resistance within the highly feminized call center industry

- still everyday actions, but they have greater opportunities to resist, and even, potentially, in more open ways than women workers in the same industry

- unionization

- open and collective worker protest

- not impossible within the call center industry (Canadian context), but unlikely (rare)

Within the industry feminized call center industry there are generally gender divisions between the various different roles within individual call centers—with women more likely to be occupied within service positions, and men within technical support and sales—which is illustrative of the way in which worker experiences within the industry are far from uniform (Belt et al. 2002, p.31; Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000, p.45; Russell 2005, pp.198-199; Domingo-Cabarrubias 2012, p.87; Interview, Sarah, 2014; Interview, John, 2014; Interview, Gabrielle, 2014). More than one interviewee noted such a gendered division of labour (and skill) within the call centers where they worked. As Gabrielle—who worked at a number of call centers within Ontario, as well as one in Atlantic Canada—noted, ‘there’s definitely, definitely a division there especially when you get to sales that are based on commission and high stakes then you’ll have a ton more males. And then when you get into the, like, retention care, you know all the deep-seated

¹⁹⁹ Although, again, here it should be noted that Scott asserted that there was still a collective element to individual resistance (1989, p.35).

dealing with people's issues it's almost all women' (Interview, Gabrielle, 2014). Several participants also noted that the male call center workers would be far more open about their sales numbers, or call numbers, and would, generally, be much more openly competitive within the workplace (Interviews: Gabrielle; Sarah; Anna; Jeremy, 2014). In many ways, this can be viewed as a gendered negotiation of workplace identities on the part of the male call center workers, who are employed within a highly feminized industry, that is (supposedly) built around providing service labour that flows directly from skills that are seen to be inherent to women (i.e. being caring, compassionate, friendly, etc.).

Here the masculinized salesman is framed in direct opposition to the more feminized customer support, or customer care agent. Therefore, this serves as way for male employees to make sense of their place within this feminized workplace. Salzinger, in her study of workers in Mexican maquiladora's similarly explores the ways in which male identities are negotiated within a highly feminized industry (2003, pp.152-171). As she explains, 'one consequence of the fact that maquila work feminization operates through bodily marking is that undoing it requires explicit contradiction. For men to be able to engage in the work comfortably, local discourses must expressly reject this feminine image...' (Salzinger 20003, p.156). While the local context of the cases Salzinger explores differ greatly from the local context that the call center where I conducted research in, one can still see similar processes of negotiation of gendered work identities on the part of employees. Although as Salzinger explains, '...gender itself is revealed here as an interlocking, always emergent set of meaning structures intent on establishing

difference in relation to sexed bodies’ and that ‘these discourses—enacted in both language and practice—extend over vastly different expanses of space, time, and social life’ (2003, p.157).

With Moira’s comments above we can see that masculinized sales role, in many cases is, favored over customer care role within the workplace (presumably because of its greater relation to company profits). Thus, call centers, while supposedly prizing friendly service, and putting an emphasis on feminized qualities such as care and kindness, are actually quite masculinized work cultures in many respects, probably because superiors/managers are more likely to be men, and foster a culture of competitiveness among men that allows or ensures that they will get the “numbers” needed to move ahead within the workplace. Men are more brazen in the workplace towards customers, because in many cases, as Moira points out, they can be. This is both because their role as ‘salesman’ is more highly valued, but also, because they are not as likely to have the same family responsibilities (or limited set of employment opportunities).

This issue was raised again, later in the interview with Moira, when I asked her what worker resistance looks like. As she explains,

M: I think that companies are very often motivated by profit and the bigger the company the bigger the more likely it is that they’re motivated by profit as their primary goal, so worker...I don’t know...like to be ethical to your workers is not very high on the priority list if you’re a company that is large enough to have a call center, or two, or several like a lot of them have. So, that means to me that workers are often treated...you know, you come into these positions really often I believe based on lack of choice which means that you have a higher level of tolerance for the B.S. companies that are geared toward profit will put you through but there’s a really great term that I know of, that they described the

resistance of people who were in slavery, or in, yeah all over the world, and it's called 'foot dragging,' meaning that if you have no choice at all you still can resist in small ways, even if it's just walking slowly.

SR: ...that's the sort of theoretical basis of what I'm working with. Yeah, so it's really interesting. So do you think that in the call center context at least that that is what resistance typically looks like, or how it manifests—the sort of foot dragging, small acts?

M: For women, yes. I think so. I think that men who are on the team are in a position to ask for more.

SR: [...] Do you remember, just sort of going off of that, any times where [...] the male workers around you would openly resist and maybe get away with it, or not care if they got away with it or not?

M: Yeah. Yeah, like the same guy I was talking about before, the smartass, he was...he would often openly make fun of my manager because he was smarter than him, and it would take my manager like several hours to figure out he was being made fun of, like during those pep talks and stuff like that he would, he would be like exaggeratedly exuberant [...] To make fun of the thing, but yeah, so he could get away with that (Interview, Moira, 2014).

Again, using the FEPGE approach outlined earlier in the dissertation allowed me to put an emphasis on the ways in which gender mattered (along with other 'social identities' (Shields 2008, p.303), such as race and age), especially in relation to worker resistance practices. If I had not taken such an approach the nuanced motivations behind these various actions may have remained obscured. I would have been able to get a general idea of what resistance within the transnational call center workplace looked like, but without probing further on the question of gender, much the insight I gained through the semi-structured interviews would likely not been obtained. By putting the focus on gender, the everyday (with an emphasis on resistance), and the global economy—and the multifaceted relationships between these factors—I was able to construct a detailed typology of the forms of everyday resistance within the industry, explore how these

actions are gendered, and examine in what ways these acts are influenced by the global economy (in particular, by gendered transnational notions and assumptions surrounding women's labour, as well as through pervasive threat that capital flight presents within the industry), and finally, the ways that these actions are also able to trouble and disrupt the global economy (by troubling the gendered assumptions that the industry rests upon, in addition to, in some cases undercutting profits within the workplace). Even those actions that do not achieve these ends are important, however, in their own right, because they reveal important information about the gendered nature of the global political economy, particularly what resistance looks like under the current economic order. Within this typology I was also able to further distinguish how within the broader category of feminized forms of everyday resistance, there are also those actions that are uniquely gendered, given women workers' positionality within the global economy. Again, this is not to say that these actions (like those within the broader category of feminized resistance practices presented in section one can not be undertaken by both male and female workers), rather that these actions take on (or hold) particular significance when it is women undertaking them. In short, based on my findings from the series of interviews, worker resistance—at least within this transnationally situated service industry—is intimately connected to gender, and by adopting the FEPGE approach, I was able to more closely untangle this relationship.

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation has been to provide an account of the ways in which workers within the highly controlled and restricted transnational call center industry—with a focus on transnational call centers located in Ontario, Canada—resist, despite the ever-narrowing opportunities for them to do so within the current economic climate; a climate in which call center companies can move freely to new sites of operation, should collective organization (among other issues) arise at current sites. Among other factors—which have been discussed in detail throughout—this has served to limit the actions of workers. Yet, again, despite this, forms of worker resistance have flourished and continued to exist within this environment, albeit of an everyday nature. It is in examining this reality that, as I have argued throughout, that we should begin to consider—at least within certain feminized industries within the global economy—that there has been a ‘feminization of resistance’ (along with the much acknowledged ‘feminization of labour’) that has led workers (the majority of whom are women, due to pervasive gendered assumptions of skill) to turn to more covert and surreptitious types of protest within the workplace (rather than collective organization). The data gained through the series of semi-structured interviews that serve as the heart of this dissertation fully support this claim. None of the participants were aware of any union presence (or effort at open collective organization),²⁰⁰ but almost all of them could note one or more of the practices that I have outlined in my typology of everyday feminized worker resistance. In fact, some even explicitly asserted that this is what resistance looks like in the industry,

²⁰⁰ Although, here it should be noted, that just because workers were unaware of such efforts does not necessarily mean that they were non-existent while they were employed at these call centers (or before, or after, that time).

when asked to describe what the term ‘worker resistance’ meant to them in this context. Although, within this category of ‘feminized resistance’ practices—which may be undertaken by both men and women workers—there are those forms of resistance that take on particular significance when undertaken by women workers, given their unique workplace experiences, and therefore can be seen as uniquely gendered.

Beyond this—that is, the observation that gendered labour structures can impact the types of resistance available to individual workers, and that resistance, in general, may be something which can and should be viewed as gendered—this dissertation sought to outline, and make use of a feminist approach to every IPE (referred to throughout, as the FEPGE approach). Here I used Hobson and Seabrooke’s recent (and highly significant) articulation of an EIPE approach as my starting point in constructing the FEPGE approach, but pushed beyond their work by placing gender at the center of analysis.

Without doing so, as I sought to demonstrate throughout the dissertation, a large part of the picture of the global economy gets lost—as workers exist and act within highly gendered economic, political, and social structures. To not take this into account, is to miss much of the nuance that their framework sought to add to conceptions of the global economy that looked solely to ‘a small number of big and important things’ (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, p.1). Looking to the everyday is not enough, we must also be attentive to the ways that gender (as well as race, age, sexuality, and a whole host of other important ‘social identities (Shields 2008, p.303)) serve to shape and impact people’s everyday experiences. This is a big piece of the puzzle, and therefore, one we cannot afford to overlook if our goal is greater understanding of the global economy. Of course,

as I highlighted in outlining the approach in chapter four, this is not a novel claim—feminist IPE and IR scholars have been making a similar argument (whether implicitly or explicitly) for decades. While this feminist scholarship did not go by the name ‘everyday IPE,’ it can, and should, nevertheless be considered as such—and indeed can be viewed as the foundation of much of the everyday IPE scholarship that has begun to appear with more frequency as of late. Although, sadly, this rich body of existing feminist scholarship has rarely been given its due (LeBaron 2010). In constructing the FEPGE approach, it was imperative to include the considerable insights contained within this feminist scholarship, in moving beyond Hobson and Seabrooke’s original framework. Thus, by using—and expanding on—the brilliant work of scholars such as Enloe, Freeman, and others, the FEPGE approach makes a necessary step beyond the EIPE approach.

Given this, my dissertation makes contributions to several literatures. First, as noted, the framework makes an important contribution to existing IPE scholarship, as it serves to highlight and acknowledge the important work that has already been done by feminist IR and IPE scholars over the last three decades linking the everyday and the international, which has frequently been overlooked by everyday IPE scholars (LeBaron 2010).

Following from this, the FEPGE approach importantly offers an everyday IPE approach that explicitly places gender at the center of analysis, which is crucial in any examination of the global economy, or global politics. Additionally, my work makes important contributions to the literature on transnational service work, as it focused on transnational call centers located in Canada, which have received far less scholarly attention than those located in countries such as India. This is not to say that this research is not important—it

is of great importance—it is merely to suggest that it is also important to consider all regions where transnational call centers are located, and the reasons why they are located where they are (as well as query the similarities and connections, and differences, between call center employees located in different parts of the world).

My study of call center workers in Ontario—with an emphasis on their resistance practices—has been one small contribution to this. Further, in exploring the connections between gendered labour structures and the forms of resistance used by workers, my research contributes to—and expands on—a growing body of literature that serves to examine and understand the gendered nature of resistance (see Ustubici 2009; El-Kholy 2002; Ghosh 2008; Marchand 2005; Harrington 2000; Camp 2004; Smyth and Grijns 1997; Hart 1991; Ong 1987; Sugiman 1992). In particular, in utilizing (and adapting) Ustubici's concept of the 'feminization of resistance' I was able to highlight the ways in which resistance practices are impacted by larger gendered divisions of labour (in particular, within this industry, in ways that have meant a marked turn to everyday forms of worker resistance). Further, in gendering Scott's conception of a 'spectrum of resistance,' I was able to give a useful representation to the gendered opportunity structures of worker resistance within the Canadian transnational call center industry. Finally, my work makes a significant—and I argue necessary—contribution to the methodological literature concerned with the use of covert participant observation. Much of the literature on this method focuses either solely, or primarily, on the potential problematic aspects for participants (who, in the case of covert research, may not even know they are participants). While this is of course crucial to consider in depth, it is also

necessary to address the potentially problematic aspects of this research from the perspective of the researcher as well. It would be nearly impossible to undertake this form of research—where deception is an everyday reality—and not be impacted by it in some way or another. Yet there is a significant gap in the methodological literature on this subject. Therefore, in discussing in some length my experiences with covert participant observation in chapter three, it was my aim to give a fuller picture of the realities of this form of research to those who may be considering it. This, as I note, is not to deter scholars from using it; rather, it is to make them aware of some of the personal considerations and conflicts that they may face as a result of their decision to do so.

However, while my work has served to contribute to various literatures, it is still clear that there is much work yet to be done—both on the transnational call center industry in general, as well as on further developing the FEPGE approach. In particular, while I explored the issue briefly in my dissertation, more research is needed to explore the construction of male workers' identities within this highly feminized industry (in other words, more work on the masculinities present within the industry is required). In addition, further research on the actual personal impacts of the highly demanding and stressful work required on call center agents is needed. In particular, it would be extremely fruitful to explore the ways in which women workers balance the emotionally demanding productive work within the call center with their social reproductive responsibilities within the home. It is this issue that I hope to turn to with my postdoctoral research. Also, there is much work to be done in interrogating the problematic reasons behind recent moves to nearshore, inshore, or reshore previously outsourced call center

labour back to Canada and the United States. Finally, while I have sought to outline and operationalize the FEPGE approach throughout this dissertation (especially in a way that might prove useful for scholars similarly interested in exploring the connections between gender, the everyday, and the global economy), it is not a finished product. It will, I hope, be further developed and refined as other feminist scholars make use of it. Thus, in closing, while my dissertation provides a window into the everyday reality of work within transnational call centers located in Canada—in particular, into the incredibly inventive ways that they fight back against their employers, and larger assumptions of gendered skill—there is much more to learn about this industry.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT POSTER



LOOKING FOR FORMER TRANSNATIONAL CALL CENTER EMPLOYEES TO TAKE PART IN A STUDY OF WORKER EXPERIENCE AND ACTION WITHIN THE WORKPLACE.

This project has been reviewed and cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board (613) 520-2517 or ethics@carleton.ca.

This study is aimed at gaining insight into the everyday workplace experiences of former transnational call center employees, and how—if at all—they sought to negotiate the restraints and control placed on them by management while employed in this work environment. The role that gender played in informing such actions and experiences within the workplace will also be explored.

Participants must have been employed by a transnational call center (that is, a call center company that has locations in multiple countries worldwide, or that serves customers in a country or countries other than—or in addition to—the country where the call center is located).

To be eligible to take part in the study, participants must have been employed in the call center for a minimum of one month, and must not still be employed by a call center. Only *former* employees are eligible to take part in the study.

Participants will be asked to take part in an interview about their transnational call center workplace experiences, lasting approximately 1.5 hours.

Participants will receive a \$5.00 coffee shop gift card upon completion of the interview, and may also receive limited compensation for travel and child care costs, where required, to help cover costs associated with taking part in the study.

If you are interested in taking part in the study, please contact Stephanie via email: stephanie.redden@carleton.ca, or via telephone: (613) 695-1331.

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INVITATION



Title of research project: The ‘Feminization’ of the Everyday: An Examination of the Gendered Nature of Worker Resistance within the Transnational Call Center Industry.

Date of ethics clearance: December 12, 2011.

Ethics clearance for data collection expires: May 31, 2017.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

My name is Stephanie Redden and I am a doctoral student in the Political Science department at Carleton University, under the supervision of Dr. Fiona Robinson.

I am contacting you to inquire if you would be interested in taking part in my study on the experiences and actions of transnational call center employees. This study is aimed at gaining insight into the everyday workplace experiences of former call center employees, and how—if at all—they sought to negotiate the restraints and control placed on them by management while employed in this work environment. In particular, this study seeks to determine what—if any—forms of worker discontent or resistance were expressed in the call center workplace. The role that gender played in informing such actions and experiences within the workplace will also be explored.

As a participant, you would be asked to take part in an interview about your experiences within the call center workplace. The interview will take place over a period of approximately one and a half hours, and will be recorded using an audio recorder.

The data collected from this interview will be stored in a secure place within my home. The content of this data will be shared with no one other than myself, and my faculty supervisor. The data will not be destroyed after the duration of the current study, and will be kept in a secure location by the researcher for use in future research projects on the same topic.

For your protection, all identifying characteristics that you provide during the interview (e.g. the name of employer, the site of the workplace in question, etc.) will be omitted from the final product. Also, your name will not appear in the final written product, and no responses will be directly attributed to you. Instead, your name will be substituted for a pseudonym in the final written product.

As a participant, you may, at any time during the interview, decline from answering any question. Further, should you wish to withdraw from the study you will have a period of one month, from the date of the interview, to notify me of this decision. At which time, any and all data collected during your interview will be destroyed.

I may contact you to ask a series of follow up questions via telephone, after the initial interview has taken place. You, as a participant, have the right to decline to answer any of these questions.

The research findings will be available to you on request. If you indicate that you would like to receive a copy of the findings, either by emailing or telephoning the researcher, then an electronic copy will be sent to you.

This research project was reviewed and received ethics clearance by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. Should the participant have any questions or concerns about their involvement in the study, they are encouraged to contact the REB chair. The chair's contact information is as follows:

Professor Andy Adler, Chair
Research Ethics Board
Carleton University Research Office
Carleton University
1325 Dunton Tower
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
Tel: 613-520-2517 E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

If you are interested in taking part in the study outlined above please contact me via email at: stephanie.redden@carleton.ca, or via telephone at: (613) 695-1331.

Thank you,

Stephanie Redden.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



Consent Form

Title of research project: The ‘Feminization’ of the Everyday: An Examination of the Gendered Nature of Worker Resistance within the Transnational Call Center Industry.

Date of ethics clearance: December 12, 2011.

Ethics clearance for data collection expires: May 31, 2017.

I, _____ volunteered to participate in a study on worker experience and action within the transnational call center workplace setting. This study is aimed at gaining insight into the everyday workplace experiences of former call center employees, and how—if at all—they sought to negotiate the restraints and control placed on them by management while employed in this work environment. In particular, this study seeks to determine what—if any—forms of worker discontent or resistance were expressed in the call center workplace. The role that gender played in informing such actions and experiences within the workplace will also be explored.

The interview will take place over a period of approximately one and a half hours, and will be recorded using an audio recorder.

The data collected from this interview will be stored in a secure place within the researcher’s home. The content of this data will be shared with no one other than the researcher, and her faculty supervisor, Dr. Fiona Robinson. The data will not be destroyed after the duration of the current study, and will be kept in a secure location by the researcher for use in future research projects on the same topic.

In order to protect the participant, all identifying characteristics provided during the interview (e.g. the name of employer, the site of the workplace in question, etc.) will be omitted from the final product. Also, the participant’s name will not appear in the final written product, and no responses will be directly attributed to them. Instead, the participant’s name will be substituted for a pseudonym in the final written product.

The participant may, at any time during the interview, decline from answering any question. Further, should the participant wish to withdraw from the study they will have a period of one month, from the date of the interview, to notify the researcher of this decision. At which time, any and all data collected during the participant’s interview will be destroyed.

The researcher may contact the participant to ask a series of follow up questions via telephone, after the initial interview has taken place. The participant has the right to decline to answer any of these questions.

The research findings will be available to participants on request. If the participant indicates that they would like to receive a copy of the findings, either by emailing or telephoning the researcher, then an electronic copy will be sent to them.

This research project was reviewed and received ethics clearance by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. Should the participant have any questions or concerns about their involvement in the study, they are encouraged to contact the REB chair. The chair's contact information is as follows:

Professor Andy Adler, Chair
Research Ethics Board
Carleton University Research Office
Carleton University
1325 Dunton Tower
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
Tel: 613-520-2517 E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

The researcher, Stephanie Redden, Department of Political Science, Carleton University, can be contacted via email at: stephanie.redden@carleton.ca, and via telephone at (613) 695-1331.

Signature of participant

Date

Stephanie Redden

Date

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FORMER TRANSNATIONAL CALL CENTER EMPLOYEES

Would you mind please stating what town or city you're currently in, at the time of this interview?

Could you also please confirm that you're no longer employed at a call center.

What was the name, or names of the call centers where you worked?

Where were they located?

How long (approximately) were you employed there?

How long has it been since you were employed by the call center?

Could you please describe the type of call center where you were employed at (e.g. type of products or services you offered).

Was the call center company the same company as the product/ service being offered, or was it a call center company only (i.e. a call center which was contracted by a large corporation to handle its customer service inquiries)?

What was the nature of your duties at the call center—were you more focused on customer support, sales, or both?

Did you work part-time or full –time at the call center?

In what country or countries were the customers you served located?

Were the agents that you talked to in other departments (i.e. when transferring calls) located in the same location or country as you, to your knowledge?

Did customers ever express frustration over the out-sourcing of call center jobs to countries other than the United States and Canada?

Can you walk me through a typical workday from beginning to end.

Was there a set routine that you followed every daily (e.g. did you have swipe in/ out (log in/ out) for lunch, etc.?)

Was your work routinized (i.e. did you complete a series of repetitive tasks repeatedly everyday, with little variation in your work tasks?)?

If so, explain.

What was the gender break down of the workplace?

Were there more women than men employed at your call center?

Were there more male than female supervisors?

Did the male workers work in a different “skill” than women (i.e. more likely to work on sales not customer service)?

How diverse, in your opinion, was the call center workplace where you work (e.g. ethnic diversity, age diversity, etc)?

How did you feel about working at the call center?

Was the work stressful?

If so, why?

Did you feel respected by your employers?

How do you feel that you were treated by management?

Did your call center employers stress to you that they cared about their employees?

Was there a union presence, that you are aware of, at the call center where you worked at?

If not, do you ever remember coworkers discussing the potential of organizing?

What did you enjoy most, if anything, about working at the call center?

What did you dislike most, if anything?

To what degree was your work monitored at the call center?

Were your phone calls recorded and reviewed by management, to your knowledge?

Was your computer screen monitored at anytime during the workday to your knowledge?

If so, were there ways to get around these controls?

Did you use your computer for non-work purposes during your shifts (e.g. games, searching the internet, etc.)?

If so, was this allowed?

Did either you or your colleagues find ways to work around the telephone or computer systems to make your job easier (i.e. use shortcuts), that you may or may not have been permitted to do?

If yes, please give an example(s)

To what degree do you think your gender mattered in the workplace, if at all?

In what way were you told to treat the customer's who were calling in?

Were you encouraged to portray an emotional investment towards the customer (and their issues) during the call?

If so, was your concern towards customers genuine, or did you view helping them as simply part of the job?

In general, were customers in general easy to talk to, or did you handle a lot of 'escalated' or angry calls?

If so, how did handling these calls make you feel?

How would you deal with these customers?

Were there ever a point (or points) when you could not be caring or empathetic towards the customer? (i.e. withhold emotion during call?)

Were there ever times when your call center became overstaffed?

If so, how did the management deal with this issue? How did you react to this?

When you think about the term worker resistance, what does that term mean to you?

What types of action do you think represent forms of worker resistance, especially within the call center context?

Did you or your coworkers ever undertake any forms of worker resistance while you were employed at the call center?

If so, were these acts meant to be hidden from supervisors or management?

If so, were these acts of resistance ever discovered by management?

If yes, than what was the response of management to these actions?

If you did engage in resistance, do you think that these everyday actions had any larger impact on the company itself?

Did you work at more than one call center? If so, please compare and contrast your experiences at these centers? Where were these located?

In your view, how important were your coworkers (and the bonds and friendships you may have developed with them) to you being able to complete your workday?

Did you work as part of a “team” under a supervisor(s)?

Did you rely on those working around you to help when dealing with customer questions/ issues that you did not know how to handle, to help you correct mistakes/ oversights, or to aid in dealing with angry, aggressive, or offensive customers?

If you can think back to times when your coworkers may have helped you, can you remember if you were likely to be helped by a female coworker, or a male coworker?

Did the call center you work at regularly offer incentives (i.e. raffles, sales awards/ recognition, etc) to motivate you and to reward you for you for your performance at work?

If so, how did you view these incentives?

Did you see them as a negative or positive part of the work experience?

While you were on the job was it hard to socialize and build friendships with other workers, to bond over your shared experiences?

If so, do you think that management made conscious decisions about how the work day/ workplace would be structured in order to keep this at a minimum? If so, why do you think they would do this?

To your knowledge, what other job opportunities were available to you (if any) at the time you took the job at the call center you worked at?

Why did you choose to seek employment at the call center?

During training, or once on the floor, did you see many coworkers quit?

In other words, did there seem to be a high level of turnover in your call center?

How were the desks of call center agents configured? Did you each have your own cubicle?

If so, could you describe what materials would have been posted in these cubicles (i.e. handwritten short cuts for calls, coupon codes, numbers of staff/ departments).

Did you or your coworkers decorate and personalize your workspaces with family photos, trinkets, ornaments, children's artwork, etc.?

If so, how did management feel about this? Did they ever mention or comment on it?

(if yes:) why did you personalize your workspace/ why do you think others did? What meaning or significance did this hold for you?

What if any training did you receive from your employers once hired?

How long was your employee training at the call center?

Do you feel that you were adequately prepared to do your job after training had been completed?

Did the trainer(s) ever mention during this time how you should go about dealing with difficult, angry, or aggressive customers?

Did your employers offer human resources training on sexual harassment in the workplace? If so, did their concern for sexual harassment, or harassment in general, extend to the ways in which customers treated you and your coworkers?

Did you ever experience any sexual harassment while employed at the call center—either by your coworkers, or by the customers you spoke with on the phone?

To your knowledge, did any of your coworkers subject to sexual harassment within the workplace, either by coworkers or by customers on the phone?

How did you (or they) deal with this?

Were you allowed to hang up on customers if they became aggressive or were sexually harassing you?

(if yes:) did you notify your supervisor or manager of this incident(s)? how did they respond?

Did you ever call in sick to work on days when you were not sick? If yes, why did you do this?

Did either you or your coworkers use smoking breaks, or washroom breaks as a way of temporarily escaping work (even if you/ they didn't smoke, or you/ they didn't actually have to use the washroom)?

When you took your lunch breaks, were they at the same time as those workers you trained with or worked on a team with?

Did you talk to your fellow coworkers while on your lunch break? If so, what in general were some of the common topics discussed? Did you use this time as a way to vent about your experiences on the phone during the day?

Did you, or your coworkers, ever use humour as a way to make the workday more bearable?

If so, please provide examples.

Did the customers you dealt with on the phone receive promotional offers from companies (i.e. coupon codes, discounts)?

If so, were these codes unique to each customer, or could they be used by anyone calling in?

If they were not unique, did you or your coworkers save these codes and offers to use when dealing with aggressive customers as a way to calm them down?

Was this permitted by management?

[Depends on nature of call center employment: the question is aimed at workers where there was a mixed task—i.e. sales and service—call center]: which aspect of the work at the call center did you enjoy most, or view as the most important part of your job—sales or customer care/ customer service?

If your job involved aspects of both, were you more likely to feel successful and celebrate with coworkers a successful sales call, or when you may have done a particularly good job at helping a customer with a question or problem?

If your job involved sales, would you openly boast about making large sales?

Would those around you do this?

If there was a day (or days) when your workday was perhaps more stressful than others, do you remember how you dealt with this?

Were there a way or ways to temporarily escape your work while you were on the job?

If so, explain.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX E: LIST OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Interviewee²⁰¹	Date of Interview	Location
Gabrielle	May 2014	Ottawa, Ontario (in person)
John	May 2014	Ottawa, Ontario (in person)
Sarah	May 2014	Telephone interview
Martin	May 2014	Telephone interview
Layla	June 2014	Telephone interview
Samuel	June 2014	Ottawa, Ontario (in person)
Anna	July 2014	Telephone interview
Patricia	July 2014	Telephone interview
Ben	July 2014	Telephone interview
Moira	July 2014	Ottawa, Ontario (in person)
Jeremy	July 2014	Ottawa, Ontario (in person)

²⁰¹ These are the pseudonyms that were assigned to participants in order to protect their identities.

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