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# Shifting Temporalities: The Construction of Flexible Subjectivities through Part-time Retail Workers' Use of Smartphone Technology

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## Abstract

Drawing on past and recent literature in political economy and feminist media studies, this research extends current work on technology's disciplinary and liberatory potential for labour. This is done using an investigation of part-time retail workers' use of smartphones in the management and experience of always-on work styles, the encroachment of work on non-work time, and whether there are alternative uses of these same technologies. Semi-structured interviews with a sample of part-time retail workers analyzed with a grounded theory approach are used to investigate participants' direct experiences. The data reveals that the theme of gender is not as strong as expected, and that the theme of surveillance is significant in participants' experiences. The data also indicates that participants experience a lack of routine, intensified availability expectations and a lack of structure in scheduling. Participants describe various coping mechanisms and forms of resistance that they use to manage the impact of these expectations on their daily lives and emotions.

## Keywords

Political Economy, Smartphone, Technology, Labour, Surveillance, Qualitative Interview, Grounded Theory

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## Introduction

The image of the bleary eyed worker toiling into the wee hours of the night on some important project is a common one throughout the 20 and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in North America. Typically, such depictions are of a journalist, executive, programmer, or other similar knowledge and/or information worker striving to get ahead or, as in the case of the executive, maintain their esteemed position gained from a similar effort in the past. Such imaginings go hand-in-hand with the common phrase “go the extra mile,” a phrase which is meant to impart the keys to success by reminding aspiring individuals that unlocking the door to the next landing on the corporate ladder involves doing more for the company than is explicitly required without having to be asked to do so by a superior. On the surface, this phrase appears to make sense: work hard enough and surely you will be rewarded for your efforts. But what happens when going the extra mile is no longer enough to get ahead? What does it look like when doing this extra work is required just to stay in the same place? Some scholars are beginning to pursue answers to these questions, and as will be shown later, many have made important contributions to understanding labour relations in the last few decades. Many of these scholars, however, tend to focus on this phenomenon of implicitly required extra work amongst middle-class professionals, particularly those working in knowledge and information based sectors. As my research will show, there is currently a trickledown effect occurring in which practices indicative of going the extra mile commonly associated with salaried professionals, such as working late or on weekends, is dripping down into non-salaried part-time workers in a variety of sectors. Aided by information and communication technologies (ICTs) managers and employees alike have an expanded capacity for working outside of times and spaces explicitly intended for work. Managers can take advantage of increasing access to internet connections and mobile devices with internet connectivity to integrate business practices that require employees to be accessible during off hours directly into standard workplace procedures.

This project expands on existing scholarship on the relationship between mobile media and labour from a political economy perspective by focusing on part-time workers’ use of smartphones, and how this contributes to the blurring of distinctions between work and leisure, or between work and non-work time. Of particular interest is how this combines with management techniques such as just-in-time scheduling to construct workers’ subjectivities

as flexible, adaptable and perpetually ready for work. A feminist perspective adds a further dimension by addressing the changing shape of women's unpaid labour as influenced by technological and cultural shifts in the sphere of work. An exploration of whether there are subversive uses of these technologies by workers and resistance to the broader power imbalances that perpetuate precarious work adds a political layer to the project. Operating at the intersection of political economy, feminist media studies, technology, labour and resistance, this research aims to investigate workers' everyday experience of a culture of perpetual readiness for work. This will be done through semi-structured interviews to be analyzed using grounded theory in order to uncover participants' experience of always-on work styles and the encroachment of work on other areas of life.

More specifically, this project investigates part-time retail workers' use of smartphones to negotiate flexible employment; the role of mobile communication technology in erasing the lines between paid and unpaid work; the everyday experience of a culture of perpetual readiness to work; and the impact of just-in-time scheduling on workers' well-being. Melissa Gregg's (2011) study in *Work's Intimacy* of workers who use computer technologies to work from home is important for understanding the field of scholarship in this area. Gregg uses the phrase "presence bleed" (2) to describe the encroachment of work and work-related patterns of behaviour and thought into non-work times and spaces. On one level this includes seemingly mundane routines, such as checking work emails at home before bed. But on another level presence bleed includes ways of thinking and acting that are underscored by a productivist work ethic. As this ethic crosses over from the sphere of work into the sphere of leisure through the use of mobile devices to work from home, the potential to work in a vast range of times and spaces emerges. Each moment not occupied by work becomes an opportunity for work-related productivity. For example, sitting in a traffic jam during a daily commute goes from so-called wasted time to time productively spent making calls or checking emails. Running alongside the processes that expand the potential for work outside of work is the emerging cultural norm that demands individual workers prove their employability through their participation in the extra work described above. Basic employability goes from simply doing one's job, to going the extra mile.

This project was originally conceived as giving particular attention to if and how the use and experience of smartphone technology by part-time retail workers has gendered



dimensions. The intention was to use the concept of the “parallel shift” to frame smartphone technology’s intersection with gendered divisions of labour. In their study of professional women’s use of smartphones to manage duties at work and in the home, Rachel Crowe and Catherine Middleton (2012) use the phrase “parallel shift” to describe the process by which women use mobile technologies to engage with work and domestic tasks simultaneously, rather than sequentially. This is an updated version of the idea of the double shift that describes the fact that working women actually complete two work shifts each day: one of paid employment, and a second one consisting of domestic work that must be completed upon arriving home following the formal working day. With mobile technology, women are still disproportionately responsible for domestic labour in comparison to men. Crowe and Middleton’s study found that women use smartphone technology to participate in both forms of labour at the same time. Wanting to build on Crowe and Middleton’s idea of the parallel shift, this project aimed to investigate whether or not related practices and/or experiences of smartphone use among part-time retail workers are expressed by participants in their experiences of always-on work culture, and if and how this is impacted by heteronormative gender roles.

The research unfolded in a way that made making the above intentions impossible to fulfil. First, more than half of the participants recruited, including three who had to withdraw their participation for various reasons, identified as female. Of the remaining participants, one identified as male and one as genderqueer. This makes an analysis of whether there are gendered experiences and uses of smartphones in this context difficult because it is nearly impossible to tell if differences or similarities in the experiences of various participants are coincidental or not. The other major factor that influenced this outcome was the apparent lack of routine described by many participants. As will be shown in later chapters, participants had little to say about their routines, and instead expressed a more flexible and adaptable way of conducting daily activities. These challenges and limitations will be discussed further in the research methods chapter.

Finally, the project will explore how, if at all, part-time retail workers use mobile communication technologies to challenge flexible labour control. Here the intention is to explore whether there are subversive uses of these technologies by workers as ways of resisting to the broader power imbalances that perpetuate precarious work. The reason why

this is an important and necessary consideration for a project of this type is because failing to explore such avenues risks assuming a deterministic relationship between a given technology and social phenomenon. It also risks assuming that participants in such process are passive witnesses rather than active participants. Coming from a Marxist perspective means recognizing the role of struggle in political economic processes. Autonomist Marxism in particular emphasizes the active role of workers in resisting the domination of capital. Instead of positioning workers as passive witnesses to the outcomes of deterministic economic processes, autonomist Marxism posits workers as both central and active in the unfolding of labour relations. Nick Dyer-Witheford (1999) points out that for autonomists class struggle is not only a crucial feature of capitalism, but the driving force behind capitalist technological development (66). If worker resistance to labour exploitation and control on the part of their employers is key to some Marxist understandings of conditions under capitalism, then it would be misguided to attempt to understand workers' use of a particular work-related technology in relationship to flexible labour control without also making an effort to include practices of resistance.

The choice to focus on part-time retail workers is a strategic one given the tendency in relevant scholarship to discuss such trends in relation to a largely middle-class information/knowledge oriented segment of the workforce. And while some authors make note of part-time workers, the primary concern still rests with full-time workers, contract workers, and freelancers. For example, Gregg's study investigates how workers' use of ICTs to work from home combines with employer's expectations, both actual and perceived, impact workers' perception of and use of time. Gregg's contribution to the field of political economy and labour studies, as well as her influence on my own research, is an important one, but her research focuses much more on full-time and freelance workers while barely glancing at part-time workers. Similarly, Crowe and Middleton conduct interesting and relevant research into full-time professional women's use of smartphones in the management of their work and home-related responsibilities. Here too part-time workers are sidelined in favour of a perhaps more obvious population, namely that which is more commonly associated with high-tech, all-hours type work: the full-time professional.

Looking at workers that are specifically part-time is intended to fill this gap in the research: it will uncover if and how practices that are traditionally associated with middle and

upper management and knowledge workers is trickling down to part-time retail workers, and what relevant consequences arise. Given the many misconceptions about retail workers, such as the idea that they consist largely of young people working for extra spending money before inevitably moving on to full-time professional employment, it is important to study this misunderstood and often overlooked, yet growing, segment of the workforce. Zeroing in on retail workers who are employed on a part-time basis will help build an understanding of yet more ways in which an already precarious population is being asked and expected to perform an ever-expanding set of tasks and skills for the sheer sake of helping the company. When combined with ideas about going the extra mile, such tasks and skills can quickly take on a moralistic quality. When an already taken advantage of segment of the workforce experiences increasing demands on its time and energy it is a process that demands rigorous and thoughtful study. These demands take the form of requirements commonly understood as practiced primarily by full-time professionals and operate under the guise of a moralistic duty.

This project is significant because it contributes to a growing and socially relevant body of knowledge on the changing structure of work, the rise of precarious employment, and emerging cultural norms regarding the use of mobile devices and time. The research is guided by the following research questions:

1. What role do smartphones play in the management of flexible employment?  
(R1)
2. How do part-time retail workers use smartphones for work outside working hours? (R2)
3. What is the impact of just-in-time scheduling on workers' perception and use of time? (R3)
4. How does the experience of this kind of work differ along the lines of gender based on differing gender role expectations? (R4)

These research questions were explored through a set of semi-structured interviews with a sample of part-time retail workers who use a smartphone as part of their employment. The choice to use semi-structured interviews, rather than unstructured or structured interviews, is

strategic because they have a balance of elements from unstructured and structured interviewing that is ideal for this research. Semi-structured interviews provide the much needed flexibility in qualitative interviewing while still maintaining enough structure to keep the interviews on topic. This is an important quality for this project in particular because a complete lack of structure could result in meandering conversation, and a complete lack of flexibility could result in important avenues for exploration being cut off by a strict interview protocol. The balance between structure and flexibility that semi-structured interviews prevents what in either case what would be an inadequate exploration of the subject matter.

Interviews were coded and analysed using grounded theory to identify emergent themes and patterns to address the above questions, and to identify areas for future research. According to Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss (2008), grounded theory is a method of analyzing social phenomenon that derives theory from data. Corbin and Strauss emphasize that their methodological understanding of grounded theory stems from pragmatist philosophy that stresses the relative nature of reality. As a result, grounded theory approaches are notable for their understanding of reality, particularly the social aspects of reality, as deeply complex and fluid. Grounded theory is the ideal theoretical model for interpreting the data generated by the proposed research because it enables the cultivation of theories as they emerge from the data. Given that the proposed research aims to investigate workers' experiences and grounded theory's roots in relativist philosophy, grounded theory is best suited to the aims of the project because it creates the conceptual room necessary for allowing interviewees to articulate their own experiences. By not presupposing a particular theory and instead deriving the theory from the data, grounded theory makes possible a fuller exploration of participants' experiences because it does not attempt to superimpose an existing theory onto data, a practice which can hide or exclude relevant avenues for exploration. Grounded theory can also complement semi-structured interviews because the process of discovering an emerging theory is complimented by flexibility during interviews.

The use of these two methods together took the research in unexpected directions. Grounded theory demands that researchers be self-reflexive when approaching the data to allow the data to speak for itself instead of researchers' expectations shaping the data to fit a preconceived idea. Approaching the data in this way resulted in some themes emerging as stronger than others. For instance, the theme of surveillance through social media, while not

initially part of the scope of the project, was so strong that it was incorporated into its own chapter. While new themes emerged, others did not. As mentioned previously, the theme of gender was not present in in interviewees' discussions. Asking interviewees both directly and indirectly about their responsibilities at home resulted in answers that indicated that the theme of gender is not as fruitful a lead as originally hoped. In contrast, early interviews revealed surveillance as a significant theme, with the first interviewee discussing it extensively without prompting. The way semi-structured interviewing allowed the research to follow emerging leads, and the way grounded theory demands that the data speak for itself resulted in the research unfolding in these unexpected ways. This unfolding answers important questions about the experience of part-time retail workers' use of smartphones and their ensuing experience of what their employers expect of them. This unfolding, however, also raises more questions than it answers by revealing that this subject matter has numerous areas that need further research.

## Literature Review

The interplay of technology, work and exploitation is a focus in the political economy tradition. Harry Braverman (1974) provided a Marxist critique of labour and technology under 20th century capitalism in his analysis of technological advances and the organization of labour under Fordism. He analysed how technology was used as a disciplinary tool to exert and extend control over the labour process and the labouring body in a factory setting. A scientific analysis of the body through stop-motion photography was used to make visible minute details in the movement of the body. Such visibility was used to render the production process manipulable by creating opportunities for intervention by experts and managers to maximize efficiency. This involved the breaking down of each step of the production process into discrete units to be assigned to and completed by specific workers. Braverman argues that this new way of organizing production replaced the craft model in which an individual or small group of craftsman were involved in the production from start to finish. According to Braverman, these craftsmen had specialized knowledge, creativity and skills pertaining to the production of the object in question. Instead, the visibility afforded by scientific advances in photography was used to isolate and separate aspects of production, and in the search for increased efficiency it was discovered that making workers responsible for one small part of production yielded higher rates of output due to workers becoming extremely proficient at one small task.

The delegation of tasks by management in combination with the fragmentation of production resulted in what Braverman refers to as deskilling. He argues that as factory workers were assigned small pieces of production instead of being involved in the whole process from start to finish, the skillset and knowledge required by craftsmen were made obsolete and stripped away by this new organization of labour. For Braverman this deskilling and the accompanying loss of creativity in production formed part of the alienation of workers. By making work into something that required fewer specialized skills and involved little to no creative input from workers, work also became less enjoyable and mentally stimulating. The use of particular technologies to organize labour this way meant that workers' use of technology for work consisted largely of the execution of pre-determined repetitive tasks.

The shift from Fordism to cognitive capitalism has wrought changes in how workers use technology as part of their employment. Stefano Lucarelli and Andrea Fumagalli (2008) describe cognitive capitalism as characterized by the flexible accumulation of capital through an exploitation of knowledge in which culture, information and social relations are the materials for value production (77). They argue that capital accumulation depends on the generation and diffusion of knowledge through learning processes that facilitate the appropriation of knowledge by capital (78, 79, 80). As knowledge is immaterial and cannot be depleted in the way that material resources are, Lucarelli and Fumagalli explain that it can culminate and circulate through these learning processes indefinitely (78). Knowledge economies exploit the social nature of knowledge and derive value from the relational flows that constitute society (Lucarelli and Fumagalli 78). Increasing the speed and scope of knowledge diffusion into all areas of human life increases the scale of exploitation and accumulation. This means that value is derived from the circulation of knowledge, information and culture through the whole of society.

The relationship between the worker and technology is different from the Fordist era of factory production because cognitive capitalism encourages an intensification of the speed and scope of the penetration of work technologies in everyday life. The office phone is no longer tethered to the desk by a landline connection. Instead the office phone is also the personal phone, and is mobile and powerful enough to be a pocket sized office in itself. The office phone and personal phone do not naturally and inevitably intersect in this way, but often do so because of the emphasis of cognitive capitalism in North America on creativity, knowledge and relational flows as the site of value creation. Unlike producing a physical commodity, such as a car or coat, the production of ideas and art, such as advertising strategies or cultural commodities, can place outside the physical workplace. A factory worker cannot take their work home with them in the same way that an artist or writer can. For the workers of cognitive capitalism, the workday never ends because an idea can strike at any moment. It then makes sense for employers under such conditions to encourage the spreading of work technologies and processes into personal life in order to maximize the extraction of this previously untapped potential for productivity. Workers with mobile offices in their pockets can more easily turn leisure time into work time.

The question then becomes what would make workers want to use personal time for

work. Popular management discourses under cognitive capitalism are more likely to encourage workers to take on the perspective of their employers and conduct themselves as though they are entrepreneurs, and many jobs have more room for creative input from employees. Uber, a technology company known for its transportation services, is an interesting example because it uses crowdsourced labour to staff its personal transportation business. Instead of hiring professional drivers to work regular schedules or shifts, Uber encourages people with cars to sign up as drivers (*Uber.com*). Drivers use an app that tells them where the nearest riders are, their destination, the route, and how much money they will make (*Uber.com*). Drivers are responsible for deciding when and for how long they work, thereby putting them in charge of their schedules (*Uber.com*). Uber drivers, then, are positioned as entrepreneurs in that they are called upon to manage themselves, invest time and energy to become successful drivers. The implication in being able to set their own schedules is that drivers can work for extra money in their spare time, making all their time outside of their other employment a potential money-making opportunity. This encourages the long hours and personal commitment characteristic of an entrepreneur, except that Uber drivers do not actually own part of the company.

Many theorists argue, however, that this new way of organizing labour is contingent on getting workers to participate in their own discipline by creating a work culture in which the normative understandings of good work and good workers are conducive to the aims of the company, and capitalism more broadly. Gillian Ursell (2000) in her article about the commodification of UK television workers' subjectivities discusses this participatory discipline. She argues that freelance TV workers engage in intensifying processes of what she calls "self-commodification" to improve employment opportunities. Making use of ideas from Foucault and Rose, she goes on to argue that workers' search for a self-actualized identity through work can be used by management to boost productivity. Similarly, Andrew Ross (2001) argues that in the non-traditional workplaces of Silicon Alley there is a coexistence of supposedly liberatory work cultures of creativity and self-management alongside conditions of overwork, burnout and blurry lines between work and leisure. He attributes the willingness of workers' participation to a number of factors, chief among them being a starving artist mentality that justifies precarious and low-paying positions through an emphasis on self-fulfillment through work. As will be discussed in following chapters, this is



part of governmental processes under neoliberal capitalism. This means that rather than governing through direct and overt rules that direct and limit behaviour, governance operates through individuals as they are called upon by knowledge discourses to govern themselves. The shape of this governance arises out of expert opinions that present a specific understanding of reality as singular and correct.

These management discourses also make use of the commonsensical understanding of a person's individual worth as tied to the extent to which they possess and make use of the hallmarks of a good worker. Here the organization of labour has less to do with imposing and enforcing strict rules in the workplace, and more to do with breaking down the concept of work as separate from life more generally to shape workers' self-concept. A key mechanism used to achieve this self-concept among workers is by extending the organization of labour beyond the physical and conceptual parameters of the workplace, particularly when the workplace occupies no specific space. Mobile technologies that allow instant and continual access to work, such as smartphones, are a crucial part of this process. By allowing the worker to take their work outside the times and spaces of the workplace, work extends into personal life to encompass how workers perceive themselves. The expectations of employers about the availability of their employees outside of working hours shifts in relation to the changed speed and scope of access employers have in contacting employees. For example, just-in-time scheduling and on-call shifts are a manifestation of employers' expectations of employees' enhanced availability because they demand that workers remain perpetually available and ready to mobilize themselves for work at a moment's notice. In cases where workers have the opportunity to refuse or challenge these scheduling practices, whether or not they do becomes part of a self-reflexive subject formation in which workers ask themselves, either explicitly or implicitly, what kind of person they are or want to be. Someone that is always ready and willing to work might be perceived as reliable and hardworking, whereas someone that refuses such expectations might be perceived as unreliable and lazy. The fact that "hardworking" has such positive connotations in contemporary North American culture, and "lazy" has such negative ones, is very telling as to the type of personal attributes that are valued and why. This is indicative of a culture that tends to cultivate subjects that are conducive to the aims of business. The need to enforce strict rules becomes less necessary when individual's self-concept is tied to their work

performance, and is framed as beneficial to the worker by claiming to offer more freedom and autonomy in an area often criticized for being boring and tiresome.

David Hesmondhalgh (2010) describes a number of critiques that illuminate the inner workings of this process. Autonomy, or the ability to direct one's own actions in a way that is free of external constraints, is central for combating alienation by reintroducing aspects of worker control into workplaces (Hesmondhalgh 234). This can take a number of forms, ranging from democratic workplace structures that encourage worker participation in decision making, to positions that require workers to be self-motivated, self-directed, and take initiative regarding their duties. The idea is that giving workers more responsibility and less direct oversight in the form of self-management will give them a sense of freedom and fulfilment that will contribute to the realization of their potential while also boosting productivity.

Some argue, however, that worker autonomy is the mere illusion of freedom designed to use workers' own sense of identity as a disciplinary tool that creates a system of self-exploitation in which workers are encouraged to manage themselves according to the employer's needs and ideals (Hesmondhalgh 235, 240). Instead of being liberated through increased autonomy, workers directly participate in their own exploitation, which obscures the root causes of such conditions. This also transfers the responsibility for an individual's circumstances from broader power structures that help determine such circumstances to the individuals themselves, thereby directing critical awareness away from capitalism.

For example, in *Networked: The New Social Operating System*, Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman (2012) look at the changing shape of work within their model of the networked individual, and in doing so they construct an image of the ideal individual as an energetic, enthusiastic go-getter with a large capacity for work, and other socially valued entrepreneurial characteristics. Their networked individual is an avid social media user and networker that strategically manages their networks to maximize social and economic rewards. Through such management strategies, networked individuals blur the distinction between their work life and their personal life by viewing every interaction and friendship as a source of potential future value. While Rainie and Wellman's analysis is depoliticized in that it is devoid of a critical analysis of the underlying power structures that contribute to this

image of the self as ideal and aspirational, it is nonetheless useful as an example how such ideals are discursively articulated and circulated.

Their model of the networked individual falls exactly within the parameters of what scholars call 'enterprise culture', which maintains that the values that are good for business are also positive moral values (Marwick 192). The figure of the entrepreneur that emerges from enterprise culture are work-appropriate neoliberal subjectivities based on self-improvement, skill acquisition and self-monitoring, and are marketable in the sense that they fit neatly with capitalist ideologies (Marwick 167). As a result, demands for increased worker autonomy are politically inert because the formation of subjectivities under capitalism is geared towards cultivating subjects that equate capitalist values with moral values. The result is a form of governmental power in which subjects spontaneously and self-reflexively identify with dominant power discourses.

Through her study of workers in Silicon Alley during the rise and crash of the dot-coms in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Gina Neff (2012) in *Venture Labour: Work and the Burden of Risk in Innovative Industries*, discusses the naturalization of risk to workers through discursive practices that make it appear routine and safe, and the way that these discourses about risk are internalized by individuals to become part of common sense. Neff is careful to situate her arguments within their economic context of increasingly risky work, and the offloading of the responsibility for risk onto the individual worker. She notes that a major factor contributing to the increasing riskiness of work is increased flexibility, because it is the ideology of flexibility that links the lack of job security to economic opportunity. The increasing flexibility of labour brought decreased job security, and people therefore became more willing to take economic risks. As insecurity rises, and risk is discursively framed as inevitable, risk taking becomes the only conceivable way to get ahead, and more people become more willing to take such risks. In fact, she states that what came out of the rise of the dot-coms was a strong cultural message that workers were expected to take on risk as a requirement of their job. Neff argues that these processes construct the image of the entrepreneurial worker as the idea worker, and she asserts that these processes are not neutral because it is political and economic power that determine which discursive frames are important, how they function, and for whom they generate profit.

Rainie and Wellman's entrepreneur is specific type of always-on, enthusiastic, energetic, professional subjectivity that precisely manages time and relationships to maximize social and economic benefits, and therefore represents the converging of work and non-work time by making every social interaction into something that can be mobilized for the benefit of capital accumulation. Their recommendations for maximizing the benefits of networked individualism combined with the convergence of in-person and digital communication turns every social interaction into one with potential work-related benefits, and also contributes the perpetual and accelerating production of content for social media companies.

As Marwick points out, the entrepreneur is a loaded concept constructed out of values primarily associated with men and masculinity, such as control, rationality and domination. She also notes that the discourses that position the entrepreneur as male also portray the female entrepreneur as unusual, which discourages women from participating. By using the language of meritocracy so uncritically, Rainie and Wellman assume that everyone has an equal ability to perform an entrepreneurial identity, ignoring any distinctions of gender, sexuality, race, ability or class. The language of meritocracy hides the identities that are favoured: young white men from middle and upper-class families. The myth of meritocracy therefore both justifies and then reproduces structural inequalities.

Neff's analysis of venture labour in Silicon Alley during the rise and fall of the dot-coms shows how the entrepreneur as a subjectivity operates at the level of the individual to produce wider structural realities. She defines venture labour as an entrepreneurial-like investment of time, energy and other personal resources by workers in the companies they work for without being actual owners of the company. Venture labour is also the understanding on behalf of workers that their time with a company is an investment that might yield future benefits. Neff argues that in acting like entrepreneurs, workers bear on an individual level part of the collective and structural risk of the company and economy more broadly. The venture labour of Silicon Alley is according to Neff also characterized by a subjective orientation towards risk and risk taking as positive attributes for workers looking to get ahead, and achieve personal and professional growth. A key aspect of this is that the individualization of risk fuelled a need to constantly stay on top of technological trends and engage in after-hours networking to avoid falling behind. This means that direct exposure to

risk and the entrepreneur as a subjectivity are mutually reinforcing because once people are discursively constructed to willingly accept risk as a form of opportunity, the common sense mechanism for survival is the entrepreneurial subjectivity. Neff further argues that by framing risk as an opportunity the different measures people used to gauge risk also serve to hide the instability of the system overall by masking uncertainty. The entrepreneur functions the same way on an individual and systemic level by glossing over individual failures and structural instability with the idea that everyone deserves the socio-economic positions they occupy. And as Neff shows throughout *Venture Labour*, these are powerful ideas that get internalized to the point where people blame themselves for making poor choices or not working hard enough, even in cases where the entire industry crashes or when it was built on a house of cards in the first place. Consequently, the figure of the entrepreneur works to redirect blame, thereby maintaining the status quo.

The status quo that the entrepreneur represents is a gendered one encompassing expectations that fail to take into account the uneven distribution of paid and unpaid labour between men and women, and how this can impact one's orientation towards work and leisure. Communication technologies are central to both the expansion of work beyond standard working hours and the development of just-in-time employment scheduling that necessitates perpetual readiness to work. Combining political economy and feminism can help us understand the extent to which 'always on' work-styles are gendered. Feminist theorists, such as Judy Wajcman (2010), have analyzed women's use of technology and its role in the performative aspect of gender, as well as potential for new technologies to alter gender relations. Wajcman discusses arguments that come out of feminist science and technology studies to articulate the complex relations between gender and technology. She argues that society and technology are mutually constituting, and as such the gender relations built into particular technologies are neither fixed, nor absolute. Instead, Wajcman argues that users can take multiple different approaches to technology that shape the gendered meanings and practices that are embedded in that technology at the same time that users are being shaped through use. This argument is a response to more simplistic understandings of gender and technology that posit gender relations as fixed within and constrained by technology. Instead Wajcman presents readers with a more complex dialectical approach that recognizes the mutually influencing aspects of gender and technology, as well as restoring agency to

users.

Gregg's study of the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to work from home found a trend towards flexibility and adaptability as requirements in demonstrating employability, and the increasing presence of work in other areas of life. Gregg uses the term "presence bleed" to describe the process by which the spheres of leisure and work blend together, and highlights ICT as a key contributor to this process. The increasing mobility of ICT facilitates the penetration of work into non-work time, making workers available for contact outside of work, and increasing the productive potential of previously unproductive times and spaces. Gregg argues that the persistent awareness of this unabated potential productivity requires constant self-management, resulting in new forms of uncompensated emotional and mental labour. She identifies the lack of official company policies regarding the use of technology for work purposes as a contributing factor to her study participants' perceived expectations because the lack of such policies leaves workers to self-impose their own assumed expectations. For example, participants working from home reported feeling compelled to respond to emails quickly to prove to co-workers and managers that they are being productive despite being at home. The lack of formal policy structures and the ensuing self-imposed expectations surrounding technology use for work operates as a form of governmentality in which workers participate in presence bleed by voluntarily working outside of paid hours. The distinctions between work and leisure are further blurred when co-workers are friends or followers on social media platforms, or when workers' personal accounts are also used for work purposes.

The surveillance opportunities created by this particular blurring of work and leisure will be discussed in its own chapter. The theme of workers being aware of how their behaviour outside of work is visible to and judged by coworkers and managers emerged through the interview process. Many expressed ambivalent feelings about the visibility to employers that social media affords. Some participants were suspicious of connecting with coworkers and managers through personal social media accounts, while others were resistant to the idea entirely. Those who were okay with it also simultaneously expressed an awareness of how they sometimes modify their behaviour, or at least consider how their behaviour might be perceived, by work-related contacts, and what consequences their use of social media could potentially have on their work lives.

Crowe and Middleton look at how women use smartphones in the management of their responsibilities at work and in the home. They use the idea of the “parallel shift” to build on the concept of the “second shift” originally coined by Arlie Hochschild (1989) in her book *The Second Shift*. The second shift refers to the additional work women perform in the home upon returning from a paid job. Implied by the term is a recognition of women’s unpaid domestic labour as work on the same level as paid employment. The parallel shift builds on this idea to describe the way that smartphones allow both sets of tasks to be completed simultaneously rather than sequentially. In discussing the interplay between the performance of gendered identities and technology, Crowe and Middleton's findings indicate that while smartphones allowed study participants greater flexibility in managing work related responsibilities and identities while out of the office, this flexibility did not alleviate pressure to fulfil gendered domestic duties in the home. In fact, their discussion reveals that such domestic pressures can intensify due to women's increased presence in domestic spaces while working remotely.

Ursula Huws (2003) analyzes divisions of labour in conjunction with technological advances, and how this has affected private life. Looking at gender and unpaid domestic labour, Huws argues that the introduction of so-called labour saving technologies in the home actually create new forms of unpaid labour by revealing previously untapped areas for commodification. She gives the example of the expanding market of unpaid consumption work in which tasks that were previously performed by paid employees are offloaded onto the consumer to be performed for free. Such commodification precipitates changes in the social division of labour due to shifts in the composition and distribution of tasks in the home and market, which includes, but is not limited to, the increasingly blurred boundaries between work and consumption. ICTs facilitate both production and consumption, and are therefore part of this process. Huws further argues that the mobility that ICTs afford, despite their material limitations, allow corporations to more easily shift work to various parts of the globe as needed. For example, Huws discusses how telecommunication and internet technologies make it possible to relocate tasks such as data entry, data processing and technical work internationally. Rather than all the work for a particular commodity or project taking place in one building, it is possible, and often beneficial due to varying labour costs, for work to be coordinated across sometimes vast distances. She uses the example of a

newspaper to illustrate this point. Instead of all the work of publishing a newspaper happening within one building or even city, the work can be dispersed throughout the country or world by, for example, having the page layout designed in one country while the printing is done in another. Huws speculates that, increasingly, mobile workers will no longer be subject to bureaucratic workplace structures characteristic of decades past, and instead will be monitored remotely, managed through results-based work schemes, and will be expected to conduct themselves with an entrepreneurial spirit (150).

In her book *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*, Kathi Weeks (2011) uses a combination of Marxism and feminism to analyze the contemporary North American obsession with work. In doing so, she identifies the pervasiveness of what she calls a “work ethic” that characterizes how people relate to and interpret their lives. Being endemic to capitalism, this work ethic has a normalizing function by placing work and values conducive to work within the realm of the moral. This acts as a justification, and even an encouragement, for workers to pursue long hours and make personal sacrifices for the sake of their employer, even in the face of unprecedented precarity. That this ethic fulfills this function so well is related to the lack of criticism leveled at the concept of work itself. Weeks argues that much, but not all, political retaliation resolves to make working conditions better, raise wages, improve benefits, and so on. What is missing is a rejection of waged labour as a necessity for survival. For Weeks it is crucial to question the values attached to and informed by this work ethic: the values that make, for example, working for an extra hour unpaid seem virtuous while at the same time remaining trivial enough to be no big deal. Failure to question the work ethic itself and its accompanying values and practices means failing to uncover a crucial part of how individual subjects are discursively constructed as working subjects, and what an essential function this plays in the maintenance of capitalism as a whole. When the centrality of work and work values slides under the critical radar, so too does the possibility of reimagining a society not organized around the wage relation.

Here the work ethic serves a disciplinary function in which workers are expected to take on the perspectives of management, this rendering surveillance less necessary (Weeks 70). This is discussed with reference to the figure of the professional for whom the previously stark distinctions between work times and spaces are being eroded. Elements of



what Weeks calls professional socialization (72) can be found in non-professional employment positions as well, as workers of all sectors are increasingly expected to self-monitor behaviour while calibrating their bodies and aligning their interests to those of their employer. The work ethic, then, is about the cultivation of people whose interests, ideas, values and beliefs fall within the parameters of acceptability as outlined by what is upheld by employers. Key to its success is the fact that survival appears to necessitate participation in a system defined by the organization and discipline of waged work. If one must work for the wage necessary for procuring food, water and shelter, among other things, and if the fact that one must work for such things is largely unquestioned, then it makes sense to adopt such values and encourage them in others.

In making this argument Weeks uses ideas from autonomist Marxism and feminism to frame her analysis. She draws on the autonomist Marxist tradition of antiwork politics by making use of theorists such as Antonio Negri to demonstrate what such a politics might look like in order to contrast with her point that a lot of criticism, including some streams of Marxism, fails to question the very concept of work itself. Weeks uses the Wages for Housework movement of the 1970s to make a similar point by showing how their demands can be extended into an antiwork politics (123, 138). Wages for Housework made political headway in its time for reconceiving the worker to include unwaged forms of labour, thus helping to refocus labour discussions to include a broader range of subjects. Moving the focus of discussions of labour politics from the workplace to other spaces opened the conceptual space necessary for conceiving of work as more than that which takes place within the confines of work times and spaces. Here autonomist Marxism and feminism blend to describe a society in which work is all-pervasive. No longer thought of as the exclusive purview of the waged labourer, work can be found lurking almost anywhere, from the home where women perform unpaid consumption work and reproductive work, to the very formation of subjects whose sense of morality is informed by a distinctly pro-work capitalist ethic.

Not only can work be found in mundane and everyday tasks, but it can also be found in the blurring distinction between work and play. Known as “playbour” this blurring goes against seemingly common sense notions of work and play as fundamentally opposed, but is increasingly relevant as play and fun become more integrated with business and

management. Joyce Goggin (2011) takes up this discussion in her analysis of the historical perception of work, play and fun, and the new hybrids that are emerging through processes of gamification that position work and play as necessarily complementary, rather than fundamentally opposed. She argues that although workers are skeptical of structured play in corporate settings, such as workplace paintball outings, there is a subtler side to playbour that favours self-motivated and self-disciplining subjects. Goggin uses the example of an IBM publication called *Virtual Worlds, Real Leaders* as an example. The document states that “online games put the future of business leadership on display” (IBM quoted in Goggin 364) because gamers demonstrate they are less risk averse, capable of problem solving in real-time, are comfortable with short-term leadership positions, and so on. Goggin argues that this blurring of work and play is indicative of how work-play hybrids train and discipline subjects in advance of business’ intervention.

Relevant here is Sarah Sharma’s (2011) discussion of the new biopolitical economy of time in which discipline is exercised through the technological management of the self, requiring individuals to recalibrate themselves to keep pace. She argues that time is a form of social power that operates beyond the sphere of work to encompass the rhythms and regulation of life itself. In the era of neoliberalism, capital varyingly invests in the regulation of bodies’ reproduction to tap into unused capacities. As a result, Sharma argues that the experience of time varies according to class, race, gender, sexuality and so on. Recalibration is less choice than expectation since adjusting one’s body and lifestyle to meet the demands of capital is discursively constructed as a hallmark of responsible citizens. Biopower and political economy intersect, although not exclusively, via time. What Sharma calls the tools and techniques of recalibration are of prime importance, as the ideologically informed temporal demands of capital penetrate farther into the fabric of everyday life, thereby constituting an investment into the very lifestyle of individual workers.

Johnathan Crary (2013) makes a similar argument in his discussion of the changing reality of sleep under late capitalism. He argues that recent changes in technology have created a 24/7 society in which markets and information systems function continuously (Crary 9). Sleep is at odds with a 24/7 society because it “is an uncompromising interruption of the theft of time from us by capitalism” (Crary 10). As such, sleep is increasingly discursively detached from necessity, with science making efforts to create products

that allow people to work continuously without sleep, or find ways to make sleep productive (Crary 3, 10, 13). The proliferation of apps and devices that monitor and correlate various biometric markers to draw conclusions about how to improve sleep are evidence of this. For example, Fitbit, a health fitness technology company, offers a range of products that monitor physical activity and sleep to optimise personal performance. The company claims that their sleep monitoring features can monitor sleep cycles to wake the user at the optimal point in the cycle for optimal feelings of restfulness upon waking. The devices can be paired with an app called FitbitTracker that collects data from the tracking device to present the user with data about sleep, activity, nutrition, weight, hydration and so on, in the form of various charts, graphs and statistics. Users are encouraged to use the device in conjunction with the app to create and reach various health, fitness and sleep goals. Another example, an app called Sleepbot, allows users to manage their sleep through audio, motion, and/or an alarm that wakes the user at the optimal point in their sleep cycle. Like Fitbit and its companion app, data collected is presented in various charts and graphs for users to interpret for the purposes of altering their sleep habits and/or environment to make their sleep more efficient.

Crary explicitly situates the push to eliminate sleep within the broader political context of neoliberalism's elimination of the social safety net, and argues that these two processes are inseparable (18). Key to Crary's analysis is his assertion that products "are hardly just devices or physical apparatuses, but various services and interconnections that quickly become the dominant or exclusive ontological templates of one's social reality" (43). Products designed by and for a system that is designed to increasingly monopolize time will contain within them the logics of that system. Politics enter into the design and intended use of the product in question, and this is often masked by the assumption that products are merely neutral tools to be used for particular ends. Thinking of, for example, smartphones as politically neutral displaces attention from the fact that they are designed with the express purpose of making managing one's personal and professional lives easier and more efficient. In other words, calling a smartphone neutral fails to take into account the actions and behaviours that are afforded and even encouraged by the design of the hardware and software of a particular device.

This is reminiscent of Langdon Winner's (1980) discussion of the relationship between technology and power and authority in his essay "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" Here

Winner argues that not only are technologies tangled up in the socio-political conditions from which they arise, but they also embody those conditions in their design, implementation and reception. He uses the example of city planning and architecture to illustrate this point because they are representative of how human relations and politics are influenced by physical spaces. His famous example of this is of Robert Moses who designed roads, bridges, parks and so on in Long Island, New York in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. Moses designed over freeways that were too low for public transportation vehicles to pass under. The result of this was that people reliant on public transportation, could not access the beaches also designed by Moses that were accessible by these freeways. Far from being neutral, the bridges he designed embody a class and race bias because they restrict access to the beach for poor people and people of colour who cannot afford personal vehicles. Winner challenges the idea that such technologies are neutral, and insists on the importance of considering whether a given technology privileges the power and authority of particular groups over others on the basis of its design. He is careful to qualify this argument with a recognition that this is not necessarily an intentional act of harm committed on the part of a particular group or person, but rather arises from the “technological deck [being] stacked long in advance to favor certain social interests...” (125, 126).

Winner describes two factors that impact the relationship of power and privilege to a given technology, the first being the simple decision of whether or not to develop the technology at all. Here the latent values, bias and interests of those making this decision are relevant because technologies are not created in a political vacuum, and do not spontaneously emerge independent of human considerations. A decision must be made to develop it or to not develop it. To add to this, it can be argued that in addition to deciding to develop something there is also a decision about the speed and scope of development. Technologies deemed, for whatever political reasons, to be of upmost importance can be privileged in development, thereby prioritising some technologies over others. The second decision Winner describes has to do with the specific design or arrangement of elements of the technology. He argues that “societies choose structures for technologies that influence how people are going to work, communicate, travel, consume, and so forth over a very long time” (127). Rather than technologies are neutral tools to be used for particular ends, Winner argues that technologies are themselves the embodiment of power and authority because of the way

that the design of a technology contains within it affordances and constraints on use.

Taking the example of a smartphone helps articulate this point. Mobile phones are not a natural progression from landline phones, and smartphones are not a natural progression from mobile phones. There were specific decisions informed by particular political interests, biases, and politics that factored into the decision to peruse such technology at all. It had to be decided that a personal and portable way of communicating by phone was needed. It then had to be decided that this portable phone also needed to be powerful enough to have a slew of extra features. The decisions about what features and how the user interacts with those features also come from politics. For example, there is a reason that smartphones come pre-installed with specific applications that are designed to encourage and facilitate particular uses. There is a reason why most smartphones come with calendar apps installed that once opened often prompt the user to synchronize the calendar with their email application. There is a reason why email applications once activated have it as their default setting to send automatic haptic, auditory and/or visual notifications to users. There is a reason why certain applications, such as Facebook messenger or email applications, do not automatically log users out when closed. At least part of why this is the case is that the political, social, cultural and economic context in which the smartphone and its apps are developed is conducive to a privileging of technologies that make personal and professional management more efficient. The existence and popularity of devices such as smartphones designed to optimize time for personal management is indicative of the values of their developers. As will be discussed later, the design and consequent use of smartphones influences the structure of personal and professional relationships for workers that use smartphones.

Crary's discussion of sleep closely resembles Weeks' and Gregg's discussions of the blurring boundaries between work and non-work times and spaces. What all three are concerned about is the intensification of a process in which workers are encouraged to conceptualize all times and spaces as potentially productive, and therefore turn so-called unproductive times and spaces into opportunities to work more. This includes, but is not limited to, the work of constantly staying updated with work emails, and receiving calls or text messages from managers and coworkers. These are some of the more obvious ways this manifests. As discussed by Gregg and others, the work of impression management is less obvious here. This involves a number of activities, ranging from being required to stay

mindful of one's role as a brand representative outside of work, to taking account of how one is perceived by coworkers and managers when connected through personal social media accounts. This is the work of demonstrating employability, a concept that will be returned to in later chapters. For now suffice it to say that the work of an employee, as well as the work of embodying an employee, now more easily extends beyond the times and spaces of traditional workplaces.

Wajcman (2015) provides an important reminder that the relationship between new technologies, such as the ICTs discussed here, is not one of hard technological determinism, and does not exist independent of the socio-political context in which such technologies are created and used. Although she stresses the importance of considerations of the context from which technologies are built and used, Wajcman is quick to note that such technologies also play a role in constituting the structure and imposition of time regimes. Perceptions and use of time, and the technologies that contribute to the organization of times and spaces are therefore mutually co-constituting. In describing this relationship Wajcman seeks to displace the all too common way of understanding technology as strictly deterministic and seemingly outside political and social forces. In doing so she describes a complex relationship that in some cases gives rise to more questions than it answers.

One such question that she discusses is the relationship between ICTs and time. Of particular interest is the seemingly paradoxical situation of people increasingly reporting feeling rushed due to their perception of an accelerating pace of life and work, and empirical evidence that indicates that leisure time has in fact expanded. She argues that to untangle such a paradox it is necessary to first understand that the pace of life cannot be thought of as speeding up in any uniform way. Considerations such as historical context, class and gender reveal variations in the interplay between technology and the pace of life. For example, Wajcman's analysis is framed by considerations of the gendered differences in the experience of time due to women's persistently disproportionate responsibilities for childcare and housework. Here gender is an augmenting factor in people's experience of time pressure because women are still more likely to be responsible for the majority of housework when compared to their male counterparts. The experience of perpetually not having enough time in a day to complete the day's tasks is therefore not uniform across the whole of the social body. In fact, the results of Wajcman's empirical study on the matter reveal that men

generally have twice as much pure leisure time than women, and much of that leisure time is, for men, less likely to be interrupted (81).

The following research takes as its starting point the theoretical frameworks discussed above. Making use of political economy and feminist technology studies, this project adds to a long tradition of research into the everyday lives and experiences of individual workers to get better insight into how macro political-economic processes impact people on a day-to-day basis. Political economy provides a framework for understanding these macro processes, while feminist media studies brings into focus how these macro processes can be understood on a micro level, while also bringing critical attention to how such processes are differently experienced by different groups. Taken together these two disciplines make possible dynamic research that puts theories into the context of everyday experiences, and vice versa. Standing at the intersection of political economy and feminist technology studies, this research will use interviews and grounded theory to add texture and context to previous work by taking the everyday lives of participants as the primary focus. The details of the methodology behind this project is discussed in the following chapter.

## Methods

Data was collected via audio recording during the interview. Consenting to audio recording was mandatory for participation. Participants were required to check a box to indicate their consent to audio recording in the letter of information (LOI). Interviews were conducted at a convenient location chosen by the participant that is outside the time and location of their employment. This was indicated in the LOI. Interviews will be approximately 45-60 minutes in length.

The protection of participants' anonymity was a central concern during the research process. Before the data collection process commenced participants were asked to choose a pseudonym. Based on a reading of Article 5.1 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" (2014) the researcher is responsible for reporting information obtained during the study to authorities in extreme circumstances when required by the law (such as when information about the abuse of a child is revealed) and/or ethical codes of conduct. Protecting the confidentiality of participants is a top priority for both the Tri-Council and this study. Filing a report based on the information collected from participants in this study would a) not be possible due to the limited amount of information being collected (for example, this study will not be collecting information about the specific company participants work for, therefore making a report impossible), and b) violate the confidentiality of the participants, likely resulting in negative repercussions for that individual.

With the above considerations in mind the interview protocol (see Table 1) was initially designed to exclude asking for specific details that could lead to their identification despite data being anonymized.

**Table 1: Interview Protocol**

Question	Potential Follow-up Question
How long have you been working in your current position?	



What are some ways that you use your smartphone for work outside of working hours?	
What is your routine before and after work on a typical day?	
What are the expectations regarding work-related uses of smartphones in your workplace?	How do these expectations make you feel?
What consequences do you face if you fail to meet these expectations?	
Have you ever gotten into trouble for failing to meet these expectations?	If yes, what happened specifically?
Are you expected to remain available during on-call shifts?	If yes, how does this affect you and/or your routine/plans?  How much notice are you given if you are called into work?
Are you happy with your employer's expectations?	If not, do you try to get around these expectations?  If yes, how?

All potential participants were required to meet the following criteria to be eligible for participation: be a part-time worker; work in the retail sector; use a smartphone for work or work-related tasks/activities; be fluent in English; be 18 years of age or older; and consent to audio recording during the interview. Potential participants who did not meet all of these criteria were excluded from participation. The inclusion criteria were selected to ensure the relevance of participants' experiences to the project. All participants were provided with a

letter of information detailing the purpose of the study, criteria for inclusion, and their role as a participant. Participants also signed two copies of identical consent forms, one for their personal records and one for the use by the researcher.

Participants were given the opportunity to share their work experiences with an interested outside audience who value their contributions. Input from participants and resulting research may ultimately serve to inform labour policies and regulations regarding worker well-being in part-time retail employment.

The results of this study provide a more accurate picture of the evolving relationship between smartphones, gender, flexible labour control and resistance for part-time workers in the retail sector. Based on the outcomes of this research, society will have a better understanding of the role of smartphones inside and outside of work times and spaces. Potential outcomes include heightened awareness about the interplay between smartphones and work culture, and improved corporate and labour policies regarding part-time retail work.

Participants were informed and ensured that no personally identifying information will be included in our study, however, participants may still express discomfort in sharing information about their work and work lives. In this situation, we would remind the participant that they should share only what they are comfortable sharing and that they can discontinue their participation at any point during the study and none of their interview data will be utilized in the results or analysis.

Participants were recruited through fliers detailing relevant information about the study. Fliers included information for potential participants to contact the researcher for further information and/or arrange interview times and locations throughout publically visible and accessible spaces in retail districts in downtown Toronto and downtown London. Fliers were not posted in the places of employment of potential participants. Fliers gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, the role of the participant, criteria for inclusion, and contact information for those interested. Interviews resulting from the recruitment process were conducted at a time and location of convenience for the participants that was outside their workplace and did not happen during shifts. The biggest challenge faced in recruitment was not in the recruitment itself, but rather in finding opportunities to actually

meet in person and dealing with the short notice that participants often gave. For example, interviews were often scheduled for little more than 48 hours in advance of the actual meeting, and several participants had to reschedule with sometimes only a few hours' notice.

A total of five participants were recruited for the study, at which point no further recruitment could take place due to time and resource constraints. The demographic composition of the participants presented informative, yet challenging information for the study. Three participants identified as female, one as genderqueer, and one as male. The distribution of gender identities among the participants makes it difficult to make a comparison between participants with regards to whether or not there is a gendered dimension to their experiences of the blurring boundaries between work and non-work time. Attempts were made to get at this potential gendered experience, specifically with regards to the concept of the parallel shift discussed previously, by making spontaneous adjustments to interview questions during interviews. For example, questions were modified or added to ask about whether or not scheduling practices or other availability expectations impacted their routine, responsibilities outside of work or life outside of work. In response to these questions all the participants either said that it does not impact them or that it makes it hard to make travel or social plans, but had nothing to say about day-to-day activities. Some participants expressed in response to other questions the lack of a set routine, which may indicate why flexible, informal and/or just-in-time scheduling and availability expectations seem to not cause major disruptions in daily routines. It might also be that knowing that scheduling is often flexible, immediate and spontaneous contributes to participants not expecting to have a daily routine, and seeking to manage day-to-day affairs with the same flexibility that they employ in managing work responsibilities. A thorough investigation of the above is unfortunately outside the scope of this project, and as such further research is needed to address this phenomenon as it is presented here.

Another interesting point for consideration that arose from the participants' demographic information is that all but one participant, a middle-aged woman, were in their mid- to late- twenties. That all of the participants were either young, but not teenagers, identified as female, or both is illustrative of the overall demographic distribution of part-time workers. For 2015 Statistics Canada reported that there were nearly twice as many women working part-time as men, with the total numbers being 2,247.7 and 1,139.6

respectively. The number of women age 25 – 44 is only slight higher in 2015 than the number of women age 15 – 24. This is in contrast to men working part-time where the number of men age 25 – 44 is half the number of men age 15 – 24, suggesting that not only are there more women working part-time, there are also more women working longer in part-time positions (Statistics Canada). The only male participant recruited, Gustav, being age 24 fits into the larger age group of male part-time workers. This is not to say that the data generated through the interviews for this project in any way can be generalized to the wider population. It is, however, to say that the age and gender of the participants recruited is consistent with employment trends. A hiccup occurs here when considering the fact that the rigid gender binary of the Statistics Canada data is incompatible with the lived reality of non-binary, agender, and genderqueer workers. This is, however, further complicated by the fact that many such workers identify differently at work than outside of work for fear of discrimination. Further research is needed to address these gaps in demographic data about workers in Canada.

Interviews are a form of talk or conversation between two or more people involving asking and answering open-ended questions with the goal of learning about something, such as a person's experience or beliefs (Roulston 10). Data can be analyzed using a number of different methods, such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis, content analysis and narrative analysis (Byrne 191). The degree of structure and flexibility in interviews can be thought of as falling on a scale from structured to unstructured. Structured interviews involve following a standardized and inflexible interview guide that is applied to each participant equally, whereas unstructured interviews follow a highly flexible, sparse and often broad interview guide. Semi-structured interviews are part-way between structured and unstructured interviews because, like structured interviews, there is a set list of questions and/or topics to be covered, and like unstructured interviews there is flexibility for following relevant leads. As Kathryn Roulston (2010) describes, the interview guide in semi-structured interviewing provides the same starting point for each interview, but each interview varies according to how and to what extent the researcher uses follow-up questions that diverge from the guide (15). As such, semi-structured interviews are more likely underpinned by the philosophical assumptions of contextual and constructionist approaches than realist ones, which has important implications for the role of the researcher.

Nigel King and Christine Horrocks (2010) identify three philosophical approaches to interviewing, each with their own impact on the role of the researcher. First, realism assumes that the world exists independent of human experience, and that this world is both knowable and describable (King and Horrocks 18). King and Horrocks argue that this approach produces knowledge informed by the positivist values of objectivity and reliability, and therefore the researcher is to remain detached and neutral throughout the interview process (18, 19). Second, King and Horrocks identify contextualism, which emphasizes the importance of being aware of the social, political and historical contexts that inform everyday life (19). These contexts intersect to impact the research process and the knowledge produced by affecting the participant's understandings and the researcher's interpretations (20, 21). The researcher using this approach must acknowledge and learn about the various contexts relevant to their experiences, research and interpretations, as well as those of the participant (King and Horrocks 21). Third, constructionism emphasizes the role of language in constructing reality because, contrary to realism, constructionism assumes that the world does not exist independent of human interpretations (King and Horrocks 21, 22). King and Horrocks argue that the knowledge produced by this approach is historically and culturally specific, and rejects objectivity and neutrality (23). They further argue that the researcher must remain self-reflexive through the research process to identify how they are influencing the production of meaning (22).

Of these three philosophical approaches realism is the least appropriate for semi-structured interviews because its emphasis on objectivity and researcher neutrality does not allow the researcher to exercise their interpretive capacities to utilize the flexibility of this method. Remaining objective and neutral means applying the interview guide to each participant equally, rather than spontaneously following leads that may differ between participants. As such, realism is more appropriate for structured interviews because they share the same underlying positivist values and processes. In contrast, contextualism and constructionism are more appropriate approaches to semi-structured interviewing. As noted above, the interview guide provides a common starting point and includes a flexible set of questions or topics to be covered (Roulston 15), but the researcher is tasked with asking follow-up question to pursue relevant leads and probe for detail. This means that the researcher plays a direct role in the creation of knowledge because they decide which leads

are worth pursuing, the extent to which they will be pursued, and how they will be pursued. The researcher does this based on their interpretations and prior knowledge at the moment of the interview, both of which can be impacted by multiple factors. For example, a particular lead may be obscured in one interview and obvious in another due to different uses of language by participants. Contextualism's emphasis on context and constructionism's emphasis on language make them better equipped theoretically to manage the requisite activeness of the researcher, open-ended questioning, and the unpredictability of semi-structured interviewing.

These factors constitute some of the best aspects of semi-structured interviews. The researcher being active and having flexibility in applying the interview guide creates opportunities for added clarification and depth that might be missing from a more rigid research method. The flexibility in following leads means important topics not thought of by the researcher can be followed to fill gaps. As such, semi-structured interviews work well with grounded theory because the process of discovering an emerging theory is complimented by the flexibility during interviews. Similarly, semi-structured interviews work well in other mixed methods approaches because they can be used to complement quantitative data by providing context and complexity, and data can be analyzed using a number of different methods. Semi-structured interviews also have the advantage of allowing people to speak using their own language (Byrne 182), which is helpful for making the interview process accessible to the participants. This method is therefore best suited to research questions seeking detail-rich accounts of individuals' experiences and opinions.

Semi-structured interviews, however, do have their challenges. This method is time-consuming and expensive. Interviews need ethical approval because of the involvement of human subjects, which can be a lengthy process. Participants must be recruited, and interviews must be conducted, transcribed and analyzed. Specialized equipment may be required, such as video and/or audio recording equipment, transcription software, and so on. In addition, the effort and resources required do not guarantee the quality of the interview. Mats Alvesson (2011) notes three related issues. First, he argues that participants may have the knowledge, but might not be able to put that knowledge into words (Alvesson 29). In this case the research questions may be difficult for the researcher to answer due to the participant's inability to articulate their thoughts. Second, Alvesson argues that participants

may be adept at speaking and presenting themselves in a particular way without necessarily having the knowledge in question, which may be an effect of socio-economic class (30). For example, upper class participants might display a high degree of skill in using language to describe themselves due to their education and socialization (Alvesson 30). Finally, Alvesson argues that participants may have a personal or political stake in how a particular issue is represented, which can impact the nature of their responses (29). Due to these limitations, semi-structured interviews are not appropriate for large-scale research questions, research seeking generalizability, and questions related to abstractions that might be difficult to articulate.

Despite their challenges, semi-structured interviews are a good fit for my research interests. Specifically, I am interested in investigating precarious workers' use of mobile devices to negotiate flexible employment; the role of mobile communication technology in erasing the lines between paid and unpaid work; and the everyday experience of a culture of perpetual readiness to work. Particular attention will be given to if and how the use and experience of mobile devices by workers has gendered dimensions, as well as the impact of just-in-time scheduling on workers' well-being. An exploration of whether there are subversive uses of these technologies by workers and resistance to the broader power imbalances that perpetuate precarious work adds a political layer to the project. Operating at the intersection of political economy, feminist media studies, technology, labour and resistance, this research aims to investigate workers' everyday experience of a culture of perpetual readiness for work.

Semi-structured interviews in this context would allow workers to articulate their own experiences of precarious labour in their own words, rather than speaking for them or making assumptions about those experiences. As mentioned previously, interviews allow people to discuss their experiences in their own language, which can make articulation easier. Since the project has a strong political orientation this is particularly important for helping to make the project accessible to the participants and the general public. Participants can also be prompted to provide specific examples that can be used to ground the theoretical aspect of the project, which adds richness and complexity to the project. Quantitative methods can miss this level of detail because of their restrictive structures. For example, asking someone to rate on a Likert scale the degree to which they agree or disagree with a statement

decontextualizes that response and leaves no room for explanation. Similarly, quantitative methods emphasize quantification, whereas semi-structured interviews emphasize description and conversation, which is a key aspect of what this project aims to uncover. As a result, semi-structured interviews are the best fit for my research interests.

Despite my proximity to the subject matter in terms of having been a precarious worker myself, it is still possible that I may miss a relevant topic or theme that will emerge in the interviews. As such, flexibility is necessary to ensure that these gaps can be addressed. Semi-structured interviews offer both structure to guide me through the interview process, and flexibility to ensure the coverage of topics is well rounded. The aforementioned proximity to the subject gives me another advantage for interviewing others in this position. Since contextualism encourages the researcher to be self-reflexive and forward about who their own subjectivities, disclosing this to participants can create a more balanced power dynamic in which they are talking to a peer, rather than an academic or expert. An even power dynamic is important for making the participant feel comfortable in order to encourage candid responses and build rapport. Semi-structured interviews help facilitate this process through flexibility while also negating the potential for the interview becoming too off topic by having a clear structure.

As mentioned above, grounded theory is an excellent counterpart to semi-structured interviewing. According to Kathy Charmaz (2006), grounded theory is an approach to research that emphasizes analysis that is grounded in the data. This means letting the data inform the theoretical framework, rather than vice versa. The advantage to this process is that it creates opportunities for adding to or extending previous theoretical work because grounded theory is data driven. Being data driven helps avoid attempts to make the data fit a theory because instead researchers are encouraged to let the data illuminate the theory. Charmaz states that this is done by following the “systematic, yet flexible, guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves” (2). This process involves using the data, coding and memo writing to define and articulate terms and definitions that best describe the data. Charmaz is careful to remind researchers that in constructing terms to describe what data are about researchers also bring with them a whole host of knowledges, experiences, biases and so on, that make pure objectivity impossible. She cautions that in light of this researchers need to be self-reflexive



throughout the research process to identify areas where the research process can be influenced by the subject position of the researcher.

In grounded theory coding involves creating identifiers to describe the potential categories for analysis that are described by the data. Charmaz describes coding as a way to make abstract ideas in data more conceptually tangible for the purposes of theory and analysis, thereby making coding akin to building the scaffolding that will inform the shape of the rest of the analysis. She talks about coding as a way to “make sense of our data” (46). Without coding data presents the researcher with a messy assemblage of partially articulated and seemingly disparate concepts. Coding, then, is a way to bring congruence and meaning to qualitative data. Grounded theory coding emphasizes letting the data determine the codes from which meaning is generated, rather than taking codes defined by a pre-existing theory and warping data to fit the codes. This helps ensure that the analysis is grounded in the data itself, instead of making data fit a preconceived idea of what the researcher wants the analysis to look like. Charmaz argues that treating codes in this way allows the data to take the research in new and unexpected directions, thereby helping to make the research informative and original instead of just another way of saying something that has already been said. Charmaz also points out that coding offers an interesting opportunity for reflexivity by the researcher because coding requires the researcher to analyze their choice of language, which can reveal some of the assumptions that inadvertently enter the research process.

In addition to data collection and coding, grounded theory makes use of memo writing. Memos are informal notes of varying length and style that the researcher makes throughout the process to document and/or process their thoughts regarding the process itself. Charmaz argues that memos are beneficial to grounded theory because they can help the researcher identify thought patterns, hidden assumptions, unanswered questions, and so on. She further argues that memos can even propel the research process forward by creating for the researcher a bank of information about their thought process that can be analyzed to identify next steps and missing or unaddressed analytical categories. Since memos are spontaneous and informal, there is little in terms of specific guidelines for how to do them. For example, they can take the form of quickly jotted notes sprinkled throughout the research process, or they can be lengthy free-writing exercises done to help the researcher process

following an interview. It is also likely that any individual researcher or project will make use of more than one style of memo writing due to the different possibilities each affords. Although there is no real guideline for memo writing, Charmaz does state the importance of keeping memos in chronological order so the researcher can get a timeline of thoughts and ideas as they progress through their research.

Using these methods face-to-face interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Interview transcripts were each read several times to help identify common themes within and between interviews. Codes were assigned to describe themes and concepts present in the interviews. For a list of themes see Table 3 in the next chapter. These codes were then used to help situate individual interviewees' experiences within the broader context of this study by helping to facilitate comparisons between participants. The following chapters are a discussion of these major themes as they arose during the interview process.

## Availability, Scheduling and Resistance

The interviews indicate that smartphones serve an important function in maintaining perpetual availability, and both formal and informal scheduling practices. This chapter will discuss participants' experience of availability expectations, scheduling practices and resistance or coping mechanisms participants use to manage expectations. Direct quotations from interviews will be used liberally to demonstrate participants' experiences in their own words. Rephrasing participants' answers without the addition of their own words risks warping what they have to say. Participants, then, will be allowed to speak for themselves using their own words and language. This chapter will show the degree to which participants are expected to be perpetually available for work, how these expectations manifest and how participants feel about these expectations. The appearance of what I call formal and informal scheduling practice, as well as direct and indirect discipline will also be discussed from the participants' point of view. Participants' resistance practices and coping mechanisms will be discussed at the end of the chapter. This chapter will close with a discussion of how the research met and diverged from expectations.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a total of five participants were recruited for this study. For a description of each participant in alphabetical order see Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Description of Participants**

Name	Age	Self-Identified Gender	Sector	Position
Ana	28	Female	[Withheld for anonymity]	Co-owner, Manager
Diana	23	Female	Office Supplies	Sales Associate
Gustav	24	Male	Body Care	Sales Associate, Team Leader
Hazel	21	Genderqueer	Clothing	Sales Associate

Nancy	38	Female	Clothing	Sales Associate
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Data collected from interviews with these participants gave rise to a number of major themes to be discussed in this chapter. The last major theme, “surveillance”, will be discussed in its own chapter following this one. For a list of these themes see Table 3 below.

**Table 3: List of Themes**

Major Theme	Sub-themes
Availability expectations	Emotional strain Labour cost-control
Formal and informal scheduling	Labour cost-control Routine and making plans Shift offering and shift cutting
Availability leaving the structure of on-call shifts	Shifting temporal structure of work Convenience
Formal and informal discipline	Voluntary versus optional participation
Coping strategies and resistance	Emotional strain Participant awareness
Surveillance	Performing employability Impression management

To begin with the possibly more intangible of the concepts above, smartphones serve as a means to increase, and in some cases make perpetual, the availability of part-time retail

workers to their employers and coworkers. This idea is illustrated nicely by interviewee Ana's description of how her part-time work permeates all hours of the day:

I apparently work for 24/7. For example, we were away in Sudbury and [my employee] was minding the store until closing... We're sleeping and she was sending me questions from the work iPad which I get as text messages, and it was waking me up while I was asleep. And I was responding, apparently, which I don't remember because I woke up and saw all these messages, like product questions, because she was trying to close a sale (7 Apr. 2016).

Although Ana's case is a bit different because she is the co-owner of the retail store in question, it is indicative of the type of availability expectations that are the norm for all the participants interviewed for this research. Her position as a part-time worker and employer/manager is interesting because her responses to interview questions not only offer insight into the expectations placed on her by others, but also her expectations of her employee:

I'm not sure if this is spoken or not but I expect all of the staff to be available at all times, which is probably unreasonable. But I expect to be able to text them and they get back to me. We've had times where I've had to get [my employee] to come in last minute or something, so I do expect her to check her phone when she is not supposed to be on. And then she expects us to respond when we're out of the store when she has product questions or customer questions. She's called me when I've been at my day job (7 Apr. 2016).

The above quotation indicates that Ana not only maintains for herself a condition of perpetual availability, but expects her staff to be available outside of working hours to respond to messages and calls within a timely manner as well. By stating that her expectations are "probably unreasonable" she explicitly indicates her awareness of how such expectations might be perceived negatively by her employee. Ana also expresses the need from her perspective for her employee to also have a smartphone despite her employee being resistant:

One of the other things is that my employee doesn't have a smartphone but I'm expecting her to have one because I think it will help a lot of things. We're considering getting her one or putting some money towards one for her because she's going to be become the manager... I think I have the expectation that people be in the current century of technology (7 Apr. 2016).

For Ana, the need for her employee to have a smartphone is accentuated by the coming promotion she is being offered because, as she discusses multiple times throughout the interview, having a smartphone greatly assists in store, employee and communication management.

For Gustav, Hazel and Diana availability expectations take the form of employers calling to offer impromptu shifts or communicate shift changes for reasons ranging from higher or lower than expected store traffic, to needing a shift filled because someone has called in sick. This form of availability is related to the second major use of smartphones in managing flexible employment: formal and informal scheduling practices. Here, the phrase "formal scheduling" refers to the communication of schedules in an official capacity or using explicitly defined institutional framework, such as a company scheduling program. "Informal scheduling" denotes the communication of changes to the formal schedule or schedule changes that happen outside official communication channels, such as coworkers trading shifts using social media or text messages.

In terms of formal scheduling, all participants described using their smartphone to access their schedules, and all participants described being contacted by employers through their smartphones for some form of just-in-time scheduling. Diana states this very concisely: "I check my schedule online because it's online now" (8 Jun. 2016). Nancy also describes using her smartphone to check her schedule: "I get my schedule through my email so I check that on my smartphone" (22 Apr. 2016). While interviewees have other ways to access their online or emailed schedules, they all choose to access them through their smartphones. The convenience of instant access to schedules online goes hand in hand with the often short notice many participants describe being given for formal schedules and schedule changes. Hazel describes the inconsistency and short notice of schedule postings in their workplace, and the difficulty this presents for their personal life:

It's really hard to make plans. We don't get our schedules very far in advance and then there's a lot of change up and so planning anything that's happening remotely distantly in the future is very tricky. And then there is the sometimes just like stress of just "what if they call me on my days off when I'm just trying to just chill and maybe do other stuff." ... We are supposed to get our schedules no later than the Wednesday of the week before they happen. So like, never have... a shorter distance than four days. But we usually get them for two weeks at a time, so... there will be one week where you have lots of time to plan for and one week where you have less time to plan for. But we also usually don't get them on the day they're supposed to come out. They're supposed to come out on Wednesdays and we usually get them on Thursdays, sometimes we get them on Fridays, but usually Thursday's the day I would expect them and actually call in for them even though they say Wednesday is the day (6 Mar. 2016).

When asked about how much notice is given for schedules in her workplace, Nancy described an older policy giving less notice being replaced by a new one, and is pleased that her employer is responsive to employee feedback:

We've always received it on a Friday, and that starts the schedule for the immediately after Sunday, which is very inconvenient when you're trying to plan a weekend. I just got a note the other day... saying that they were going to be changing that so it would be two weeks in advance... As an adult with a car who sometimes goes out of town it's really inconvenient to get your schedule at midnight on a Friday night of the week that starts on a Sunday. And like I say, I think they recognize that. We do feedback surveys and stuff with the company and so I've expressed that and I'm sure other people have as well. And so I think it's that that had something to do with the fact that for whatever reason they've changed the policy now, so that's great (22 Apr. 2016).

For Gustav, changes in store location meant he had less notice than usual for his schedules, meaning he had to be particularly flexible to cope:

With my scheduling inside the shop normally the company is good about making sure the manager has set up a schedule in advance, like maybe 2 weeks in

advance. However, with my current manager there have been quite a few hiccups. I believe last week we didn't receive our schedule...with starts from Monday to Sunday, we didn't receive it our schedule until the Sunday right before that Monday, so the day before. But that rarely happens. A couple weeks prior we would receive the schedule and then it would have to get changed of course, but normally about it's about a week in advance... It was actually due to our shop opening. So we closed down our current location in the mall and opened up a new one and she was just waiting on a couple of dates, but at the same time she didn't want to release too many dates just because she didn't want those to be thought of as absolutions (1 May 2016).

Not wanting her employees to think that schedules released during this transitional period were final, Gustav's manager withheld schedules to avoid having to commit, thereby requiring a higher than usual level of availability and flexibility from her employees. Particularly in the instance where the schedule was received the night before, Gustav and his coworkers would have to have been extra diligent about checking schedules during this period. In creating this situation, the manager externalized the responsibility for scheduling mistakes by putting her employees in a position where they are required to stay informed so that the manager can take extra time to make scheduling decisions.

With informal scheduling, several interviews describe a situation where availability outside of work has left the confines of the on-call shift as their employers replace or supplement on-call shifts with spontaneous shift cuts and offerings. Nancy describes this change in her workplace:

There used to be a policy there where people would be given on call shifts and then they would just call you in if they need you, but...actually when I got hired there I was reading up about the company and I think that they had complaints and they got rid of that policy. So no they don't have that any more. Your shift is your shift, but they kind of get around by they can cut your shift. So that's only happened to me once, but they did call in an afternoon and they cut my evening shift (22 Apr. 2016).



Here Nancy's employer accommodates employee preferences while still making use of employee flexibility to manage the store's staffing needs. As Nancy says, your shift is your shift, unless it is not. Gustav describes a similar situation in his workplace:

With my company we don't have to be on call. We don't do that just because we believe it's kind of silly. Normally what happens is people will be scheduled and if we do need more those shifts are offered or people are called to be like "hey are you available to come in today?" But on-call shifts are not scheduled with our company (1 May. 2016).

Like Nancy's workplace, Gustav's employer does not use on-call shifts, and staffing needs are met on an as-need basis, often with short notice:

Usually they'll try to give me as much notice as possible. In some cases, it will be the morning of and I'll be asleep and I'll get a text being like "hey would you be able to come in today?" Or maybe they'll call me and ask if I can come in. Normally they're pretty lenient with what time I can come in if it's fairly soon. So they wouldn't expect me to come in immediately within the hour. They'll give me a two-hour grace period (1 May. 2016).

Here Gustav describes being woken up on days off by messages or calls asking him to come in for an unplanned shift, sometimes with as little as two hours' notice. Diana also describes a situation where on-call shifts are technically optional for the benefit of the employees, but managers use informal methods to fill shifts on an as-needed basis:

...sometimes they'll put up shifts that can be anywhere from 2 hours in advance. Those are just open shifts so people can pick whether or not to grab them. And then sometimes when people ask me to pick up shifts, like trade shifts, it will be at best a couple days before, but it also could be up to a couple hours before... You don't have to do [on call shifts] because most of the people who work there are students and they're like "we recognize that you are busy" but I think they...prefer it (8 Jun. 2016).

For Nancy and Gustav on-call shifts do not exist because their employer is trying to better accommodate employees' preferences into how scheduling is conducted. In Diana's

case, while on-call shifts are preferred, they are optional due to her employer's awareness that most of the employees working there are students and consequently have competing responsibilities. To compensate for this, employers in all three cases make use of informal scheduling with short notice to manage labour needs. Here employers circumvent the need for on-call shifts to accommodate the desires of employees by using employees' perpetual availability to make all hours of the day into one endless on-call shift. The elimination of the temporal structure of on-call shifts contributes to an ever-present potential for employees to be contacted to be called into work. The potential inconvenience of this is partially alleviated by many of the shifts being optional, or at least presented as such.

There exists, however, a power dynamic in which employees may feel more compelled to take shifts they do not want because they need the money. Whether or not part-time workers get their schedules well in advance is in some ways secondary to the ever present potential for that schedule to change day to day with sometimes as little as a few hours' notice. And when employers call offering the spontaneous shifts discussed above, there is an economic imperative for employees to accept those shifts. As Hazel describes, sometimes these shifts are undesirable yet necessary due to monetary need:

It happened a lot more at the store I was at previous to this one. They had less traffic so the hours that they had available were more limited and they would sort of schedule a lot of like "maybe if we get the hours" time with people. And there was a lot of change and inconsistency and you're expected to just sort of like roll with it to the best of your ability because they don't really care and you need the hours (6 Mar. 2016).

In contrast to Nancy, Diana and Gustav, all of whom talk about their employers with at least some positive feelings about how they handle scheduling, Hazel appears more cynical when they state that their employer does not care about the impact of scheduling inconsistencies on employees. Hazel also reveals the power dynamic mentioned above because they express an acute awareness of how their financial position impacts their ability to turn down shifts or refuse to meet particular availability standards. Refusing to participate precludes the possibility of getting extra shifts at a job that is their primary source of income. Hazel's comment above also indicates that their employer uses their awareness of this power

dynamic to maintain standards of availability and flexibility that are desirable for the employer.

The interviews also revealed that this type of informal just-in-time scheduling works the other way too, whereby shifts can be cut with very short notice and employees are expected to remain available to receive this information as it happens. Nancy describes her employer as being extremely precise in scheduling and making use of just-in-time scheduling to manage labour costs:

They're very careful...to only give you no more than...3 hour and 45 minute shifts because then they have to feed you or give you a dinner break. So all of my shifts are between 3 hours and 3 hours 45 minutes. And what will sometimes what will happen is if you have 3 hours 45 they will cut you to 3 if they're not doing well that day because if they cut you for less than 3 they have to pay you for 3. So they're very by the minute... If they're cutting your shift entirely there must be some rule about how much notice they have to give you. Again, it only happened to me once and they gave me hours notice. 5 hours maybe (22 Apr. 2016).

From an employer's perspective Ana describes similar practices where schedules are tentative and changes are often communicated too late:

So sometimes I'll be like "schedule yourself tentatively." It was more of an issue before when she was on an hourly basis because sometimes it would be unfair because she would then not make other plans. But then if we had tentatively scheduled her I would feel like I needed her to come in so she could get the money. But then if you schedule them too much and you ask them not to come in then they get upset because they don't get the money and because they've put stuff on hold for you...Sometimes I'll still tell her, because she wants a day off, I'll tell her "well tentatively don't...schedule anything that day and I'll let you know." Usually I let her know too late which is why she gets mad (7 Apr. 2016).

Ana's awareness of her employee's needs and feelings, and comments made by other interviewees about their employers' approach to such matters are an important reminder that

these scheduling practices do not result from employers looking to take advantage of or inconvenience their employees. Rather than stemming from malicious intent, such practices are the result of political economic conditions in which employees are expected to go above and beyond for their employer, part of which often involves living up to intensified availability and flexibility standards.

The above insights into the availability expected of part-time retail workers can be thought of using Gregg's concept of presence bleed discussed in the literature review. This is particularly the case for participants that described the substitution of on-call shifts with more informal and less structured forms of just-in-time scheduling. Getting rid of the structured availability of on-call shifts and instead filling positions as needed by calling employees or sending emails they are expected to check, employers contribute to presence bleed by further pushing work responsibilities outside the times and spaces of work. The fixed, temporal structure of on-call shifts is replaced with an unending timeframe in which employees may be called into work, and even though the subsequent shift changes are presumably more likely to be optional, they are in some ways still mandatory. As Hazel mentions below, the shifts that get offered for people to take voluntarily sometimes come with the assumption that the person receiving the offer is going to say yes. This means that saying no comes with the stress of anticipating the potential irritation of an employer when they must seek alternate arrangements. These expectations in combination with the need for money described above means that these optional shifts are in many cases located farther on the "not optional" side of the spectrum. This is not to say that people do not or cannot turn these shifts down. They certainly can and do. It is, however, to say that there are a number of factors at play that in many cases make it more likely for them to say yes, even when they might want to say no.

When employees fail to meet the availability expectations set for them they can face both direct and indirect forms of discipline. Although some of the participants did not know what formal discipline exists for failing to meet expectations, a number of participants described the actuality or possibility of direct discipline taking the form of face-to-face discussions with managers, and all participants had some idea of what indirect discipline might occur. Gustav describes these with regard to his current situation:

If I fail to meet basic expectations like being on the shop floor, of course that can result in repercussions that include like one-on-one conversations. But there is always a form of development. In terms of my current role, if I'm not well versed in certain campaigns that I'm going to train about then that does impact the shop not being as strong, which does reflect on me. And repercussions of that include me having difficulty transitioning to my training team or to different roles. And at the same time...if it were serious enough or a consistent amount of a lack of results or work then I could potentially be moved off my current position (1 May. 2016).

This comment is significant when contextualized by his comments about yet another way he uses his smartphone for work outside of work times and spaces:

Ideally with my company they would like us to be paid...if we're doing work outside of work. So ideally if we're doing work outside like reading they'll try to schedule so that inside the store we're doing it. But with our internal resource, which gives us information on upcoming campaigns and stuff like that, that one is a sort of work agreement where you're allowed to have access to it and anything you do inside of that is outside of your work and it is not an expectation that you read it...I'll also use it to learn about certain campaigns or strengthen my product and brand knowledge or just prep myself for training sessions that I'm doing. So I do love the fact that I'm able to do that because at work it's just not feasible for me to take the time to do the research because honestly it's just too busy and we just don't have the hours for it (1 May. 2016).

The above two excerpts are significant when taken together. As a team leader who is sometimes responsible for training coworkers and new-hires, Gustav is expected to have exemplary product and campaign knowledge. By using internal resources to educate himself he helps ensure that his performance on the sales floor and as a trainer is getting the desired results. This self-education is done outside of working hours because, as he says, even though the company would prefer him to do this work during shift hours, there just realistically is not enough time during a shift for that. This means that Gustav is in a situation where working outside of working hours is necessary for him to maintain performance

standards. According to his comments, if he fails to maintain these standards he risks not being able to take on other roles, or if the issues are consistent and/or serious enough he could be removed from his leadership positions entirely. His potential inability to progress to other positions within the company is a form of indirect discipline whereby instead of being directly reprimanded in an official capacity by his employer, he is indirectly reprimanded by having opportunities closed off. The potential for him to be removed from his position is a form of direct discipline because removing an employee from a leadership role involves using the formal disciplinary channels of demotion. For Gustav then, there exists potential direct and indirect forms of discipline that inform his decisions regarding whether or not to engage in unpaid work on his smartphone outside the times and spaces of work itself.

Ana also describes the presence of indirect forms of discipline in her business:

I don't face consequences because I'm the boss...consequences mean that we sell less. Like we lose a sale if we don't get back to our customers or something like that. Or people are upset we didn't get back to them earlier. But our employee ...as she takes over the position of manager part of her income is going to be commission based and beyond a certain limit we'll be profit sharing. So if she doesn't keep up with things and our sales suffer then she'll actually make less money. And that's part of the reason we set it up that way so that she has an incentive to put time into communication outside of business hours for example. If we just paid her by the hour or paid her a fixed salary she wouldn't have that salary (7 Apr. 2016).

Here discipline for her employee as she transitions into the role of manager takes the form of an economic imperative to engage of work outside of working hours. This is indirect discipline because, instead of following formal disciplinary procedures, such as a write-up process, discipline takes the form of her employee not making as much money. Diana guesses that there is likely a different, but related form of discipline in her workplace:

I don't think I've ever not checked [messages] within a day so I have no idea... [The employer] would probably talk to you first...but aside from that I don't know. They probably just stop asking you for shifts after a while because you wouldn't be able to take them (8 Jun. 2016).

In this instance Diana, having not knowing for sure if there is a formal disciplinary system and never having failed to meet expectations, guesses that discipline would take an indirect form in which employees who do not make themselves perpetually available are not offered extra shifts.

When asked if they every try to get around the expectations employers have for them most interviewees described various coping mechanisms that they use to manage the pressure of their employers' expectations. These coping mechanisms include strategies to maintain the appearance of employability while also coping with the reality of not being able to or wanting to be available. For example, although Hazel describes experiencing stress while doing this, they nonetheless sometimes turn down shifts in the interest of maintaining personal health: "There have been... a few instances in which I have turned down shifts that I think they expected me to take and then been super anxious and guilty, but then been like 'that was no notice and I have genuine plans or are genuinely sick'" (6 Mar. 2016). Even though Hazel indicates their belief in the unfairness of asking them to cancel plans or work while ill on little to no notice, they still feel anxious about how this will impact their employer's perception of them as a worker. They go on to express this sentiment in the following statement:

As much as I think it's like silly that I'm supposed to put all of this emphasis in energy, and [have] this job be so important to me, that is kind of how it ends up working because while I'm like only there part-time, it's my main source of income. I'm serious about most of the things that I do because I'm of an intense person so I had to try and be an employee that they are pleased with because otherwise I am more stressed (6 Mar. 2016).

For Hazel maintaining the image of a good employee is a strategy for alleviating stress by attempting to create positive opinions of them on the part of their employer. Diana engages in a similar practice of strategically cultivating the appearance of a good employee:

There are sometimes when I see a message and I'm like "someone else will take that" and I just ignore it...Phone calls are a little harder, but I also ignore them. Sometimes it will be a few hours before I come in and I'm like "I'm not coming in any earlier" so I just wait until I'm actually there and I'm like "oh what did

you want to ask me about because I was somewhere where I couldn't get reception" ... I respond to them within the same day, just longer until other people have responded first. Or I wait like 6 hours because I'm like "someone else has talked to them by now." And then some other times I do take their shifts, so it all looks natural (8 Jun. 2016).

Here Diana is describing the intentional act of "manipulating how you appear to be available through avoiding calls and emails" (8 Jun. 2016), while also making sure to respond often enough and take enough shifts so that it seems "natural" to her employer. In this way Diana is able to maintain the impression of performing employability by meeting expectations, while also creating some separation from the demands of her employer.

Diana's strategic ignoring of calls and emails is a nice illustration of how technologies can be used for resistance, rather than simply being tools for domination. As many Autonomist Marxist scholars have argued, technologies arise from conditions of struggle, and therefore contain the politics of domination and resistance. Instead of seeing her smartphone as a device that demands constant attention and instant responses to messages and calls, Diana sees it as a tool of resistance whereby she can choose to ignore her employer's attempts at communication. Even though mobile technologies like smartphones contribute to the intensification of the speed, scope and immediacy of work-related communication, Diana is not entirely powerless. She retains and exercises the power she knows she has to simply not answer. Rather than leave her unavailability unexplained, Diana uses her professional etiquette to make these moments of unavailability excusable by appearing to still be attentive to her employer's needs. In doing so she mediates some of the potentially negative consequences of not meeting these availability standards while also addressing her own needs for space. This practice is not uncommon in Diana's friend group either. She states that "sometimes I'm hanging out with someone and they get a call from work and they're like 'I'm not answering because they're going to ask me to come in'" (8 Jun. 2016). Although none of the other participants interviewed for this study described using this specific strategy, Diana's comment about her friends using this technique indicates that perhaps this practice is more wide-spread than could be discovered within the scope of this research.



Ana copes by finding technological solutions to help her better manage her work responsibilities. She says that she is “always trying to implement better systems, which is why I’m the one who thought of the scheduling system and the one that thought out different things. I’m always trying to find things that make more sense” (7 Apr. 2016). She then goes on to give lengthy descriptions of the many apps and services she uses to manage her store, almost all of which are accessible through her smartphone. She supplements her technological solutions with face-to-face conversations to alleviate some of the stress of coordinating digitally:

I think the other way we try to get around it is just talking. So even though we have these systems in place sometimes we end up scheduling just based on actual words that we say to each other about schedules... Pick up the phone and talking, and having that human connection. I try to come in everyday so that at least I see my employee and we can talk face-to-face (7 April. 2016).

Even though Ana revealed in her interview that her business and employee management rely heavily on technological solutions, she maintains and seems to take comfort in a consistent in-person employee-employer relationship. Gustav also uses face-to-face conversations with coworkers and managers to cope with stressful situations:

I try to cope with that by talking with certain members of my team that I feel really comfortable with to talk about it with, or folks who maybe are having the same issue as I am or having the same sort of grievances. So usually that’s how I do it. I talk with this person, rant a little and like, they rant back. And sometimes...usually I talk to my managers if something is causing me some stress. Letting them know how I felt about the situation and perhaps how they could have circum-navigated that circumstance. [It’s] usually over face-to-face, sometimes over text if I’m not available. Usually if it is over text at some point there usually is a face to face conversation (1 May 2016).

The question of how these expectations make them feel was met with varying responses. Ana describes very much liking the expectations she maintains for herself and others, even though she knows her employee has opposite feelings on the matter:

I like it. I know my employee doesn't. One of the reasons she's hesitant to get a smartphone is when she goes home she wants to be home. She doesn't want to have to keep up at home. But that doesn't bother me. I've always been like that. And I've always had jobs without set hours and jobs where I work way more than I'm probably expected to, so it's very normal for me to take my work home with me. So that doesn't bother me at all. I would say if there is any friction it's the friction of other people not being like me. So yeah...I like being connected (7 Apr. 2016).

Gustav also describes having positive feelings about work expectations: "I like that they give us a little more ownership in terms of our own self development. Because I use [my smartphone] to look at how the shop that I work in is doing, or how the team or training team that I work with is doing" (1 May. 2016). Here Ana and Gustav both describe these expectations as giving them positive feelings. As a part-time worker in a business she owns, and as someone that has an additional full-time position somewhere else, Ana's connectivity allows her to take work home, which for her is not only routine, but also her preferred way of organizing work tasks. Taking on leadership roles and accessing work resources outside of work gives Gustav feelings of ownership and confidence in performing in his capacity as a leader at work.

Hazel and Diana describe expressed more negative feelings in response to this same question. Hazel says that "[n]ot having my phone on me on the job makes a lot of sense. Using my break time for anything other than my break is generally annoying" (6 Mar. 2016). This comment is a reference to a comment Hazel makes at the beginning of the interview:

The expectation is that we never have our phones with us on the sales floor or while we're actually doing our jobs, but we are allowed to have them out in breakrooms and sometimes encouraged to use them to try and get a hold of people that the store is having trouble contacting. So sometimes a manager will ask me to call someone on my break to find them basically, ask them a question (6 Mar. 2016).

The fact that managers ask them to perform work tasks using their phones during their breaks at work, such as contacting coworkers, is annoying for Hazel. The point of having break time

at work is to actually take a break, but as Hazel indicates, it is disruptive and not break-like to be asked to continue working. Diana similarly expresses feelings of annoyance about her employer's expectations: "[I feel] annoyed if they call in for a shift because I want the money but I'm like 'no I wasn't prepared for this' and then I have to prepare myself for it very quickly instead...mentally, like 'I have to go to work'. Get yourself into work mode" (8 Jun. 2016).

Diana experiences the tensions between the mental strain of being called into work on a day off and needing the money as annoying. Her comment about having to mentally prepare herself for work indicates that there is more to work than showing up and performing. There is a mental preparation aspect that begins before the worker even arrives. Hazel describes a similar process: "I am a very anxious person so I try and take a bus or two... earlier than I need to get to work on time, and then I'll sit in a coffee shop for a little bit and just sort of try and ground myself a little bit, center my thoughts, write in my book" (6 Mar. 2016). Here Hazel talks about using grounding exercises to mentally prepare for work. The mental strain of work on Hazel also extends into time off as well: "...there is the sometimes just like stress of just 'what if they call me on my days off when I'm just trying to just chill and maybe do other stuff'" (6 Mar. 2016). Instead of being able to relax during days off Hazel becomes stressed out about the potential for their employer to ask them to take a shift, indicating that such scheduling practices and availability expectations can be a burden on workers' mental health.

Nancy's response to this question are more ambivalent than the other participants' responses:

In terms of using it outside of work the constant emails giving me promotions and stuff are annoying, but I just delete them on the days when I'm not working, and on the days when I am working I like it because then I know what I'm talking about. so I'm happy to spend two minutes reading the email sometime during the day so that I know how to do my job when I get there. Yeah, it's okay (22 Apr. 2016).

Instead of engaging with work emails on her days off, Nancy reserves her attention for days when she is working, and she feels positively about how this aids in her ability to perform at

work. The way she ignores work emails is different from how Diana does it. Diana does it strategically, and makes sure to follow up when she knows it is too late in order to maintain appearances. Nancy ignores emails completely by deleting them on days she is not working. The fact that she is the only participant that describes doing this is interesting given that she is also one of only two participants to be married to a partner that works full-time, and has a full-time day job herself. The only other participant that fits this description is Ana, who as a business owner has a vested interest in not ignoring work emails. It might be that the financial security provided by her other job affords her enough confidence in her situation to refuse to engage on days off.

When asked the similar, yet slightly different, question of if they are happy with their employers' expectations most participants had slightly different answers than the question about how these expectations make them feel. For example, Ana, who answered very positively about how these expectations make her feel, had a very negative response to this second question:

No, I'm never happy. I don't really think we're running this professionally, and part of that is because we don't have management experience, and part of it is because we're just so busy. So we always feel like we're not doing stuff in advance, not doing promotions in advance, we're not scheduling people in advance. So I'm not happy with how the system is. I actually think things will improve when [my business partner] and I leave. I don't think I'm doing a good job (7 Apr. 2016).

In this comment Ana reveals her mixed feelings about how her business is being run. Her previously positive comment about working continuously and being available constantly is dampened by her negative feelings about everything happening with short notice. The satisfaction she gets from perpetual availability seems a bit offset by the indication in this comment that she is just able to keep up with the demands of owning a small business.

Diana and Gustav also have slightly more ambivalent answers to this question. Gustav is happy overall with his employer's expectations, but seems slightly annoyed with the amount of management that goes on: "I'm happy that she trusts me to do my job...I'd say occasionally there is a bit of extra management, not micro-management, but checking in. But

I am happy with the expectations of my shop manager” (1 May. 2016). Rather than being generally happy with hints of irritation like Gustav, Diana is generally annoyed with hints of satisfaction: “It’s kind of annoying, but it’s mostly okay” (8 Jun. 2016). This comment, in combination with the overall tone of her interview, supports the conclusion that she experiences more feelings of annoyance than this comment alone indicates.

Hazel also expresses some ambivalence in response to this question, but definitely feels more negatively than positively:

Sometimes I am pretty content with most of what my job entails, but I think there is sort of an environment of expectation that I am not fond of and that doesn’t match up with like what I want my job to be. I work at part-time minimum wage and I don’t want to have to eat, breath and like bleed for his children’s clothing company. I don’t to be like posting about their like sales and my personal Facebook to be trying to get more traffic to like my personal store. I don’t want to be playing that game (6 Mar. 2016).

For Hazel the degree of dedication by demanded by their employer is unreasonable given that it is a part-time job at minimum wage. Hazel’s comment about their employer encouraging them to use personal social media is interesting for two reasons. First, Hazel indicates an awareness of the discrepancy between this expectation and the way employees are remunerated. The second point of interest is that Hazel hits on something that is an interesting point for further research, namely that their employer encourages employees to use personal social media accounts to share store promotions, and promote the store in general: “it something that is like has been started to be like encouraged, but is not something that I’ve heard anyone say that anybody has to do as of yet” (6 Mar. 2016). Without being an explicit requirement, but still being encouraged means that engaging in this activity is likely on par with other expectations discussed here in terms of there being indirect discipline for not participating.

Nancy also expressed more mixed feelings in answering this question, but takes issue with the expectations during, rather than those that extend beyond her shift:

Yeah, I think they request the right amount of work considering what the pay is for the job. There are some leadership roles you can take within the company but I don't believe you get paid any more for those, so I have so far been rejecting those offers. If you do it's negligible so it's just not worth the extra time...for the money. I think they sometimes give more work than they think can be accomplished in the course of a shift...as a motivational tool, and I point out that that is actually depressing and a de-motivator, for me anyway (22 Apr. 2016).

The interviews revealed a number of interesting experiences, some of which met preconceived expectations, and some that did not. The biggest experience that met expectations was interviewees' descriptions of the demand for constant availability. Even when not phrased as such, all the participants talk about receiving work-related communication at just about any time of day. More than one participant, namely Ana and Gustav, even describe being woken up by these messages and calls. Participants describe being contacted shortly before shifts to either ask them to come in early, or to inform them that their shift has been cut short or cut entirely. Finally, participants also describe being contacted on days off to have shifts offered to them on short notice. In addition to being called to communicate shift changes, participants check work email outside of working hours, sometimes more than once a day, with the expectation on the part of the employer that workers will respond even though it is work communication happening outside of paid hours.

The most surprising thing that came across during interviews is just how mixed the emotional indicators expressed by participants are. Most participants describe being frustrated or annoyed with availability expectations, the short amount of notice given for schedules and shift changes, and the difficulty all of this creates for making plans or even just enjoying days off. Participants also describe being satisfied overall with their employer's expectations, often in the same sentence that they are expressing frustration and/or annoyance. The benefit of qualitative interview research such as this is that it not only provides context and depth to research, it also yields and allows for the investigation of complex and sometimes contradictory experiences that can compliment quantitative approaches. Further research is needed to specifically investigate the complexities of the emotional orientation this population of workers has towards their jobs and employers.

Another interesting area that diverged from expectations was on-call shifts. It was expected going into this research that most, if not all, participants would be scheduled for on-call shifts in which they must remain available for a particular time period. While some participants did have on-call shifts, others discuss their employer getting rid of on-call shifts at the request of employees. This is interesting because the interviews indicate that this is a decision made to better accommodate the desires of employees at the same time that participants describe their employers circumventing this with the informal just-in-time scheduling practices discussed above. Whether or not employees prefer this arrangement in the long term remains to be seen. It could be that the constant potential for being contacted will prove to be more stressful overall than having the temporal boundaries of an on-call shift. It could also be, however, that as scheduling becomes more like this, more people will make use of coping mechanisms such as those described by Diana, namely strategically ignoring work messages and calls while also cultivating the image of a good employee. This is an area that needs further research, potentially over the long-term to best investigate this trend over time.

## Surveillance, Smartphones and Social Media

This chapter discusses the major theme of surveillance as it emerged from the interviews. In doing so this chapter will investigate the intricacies at play in the relationship between worker identities and surveillance as experienced through smartphone use. Taking up an argument made by Melissa Gregg (2011) and others, this discussion is concerned with how social media and mobile devices are contributing to a trend in which entry level employees are displaying impression management characteristics outside of work; a practice previously more associated with upper management. The argument is that the increased scope and reach of surveillance is extending the need to perform certain aspects of employability. Erving Goffman's (1959) work on performance, and front and backstage is used to illustrate how surveillance extends work-related performance outside the times and spaces traditionally associated with work. This surveillance also helps perpetuate certain norms through interactions with Michel Foucault's (1982) concept of governmentality. In being made responsible for managing the risks characteristic of modern institutions, as described by Anthony Giddens (1991), workers make use of knowledge filtered through experts to assess the range of possible action. All of this takes place within an historical context that promises increased freedom and autonomy for the worker, while delivering increased surveillance and control. Social media and mobile devices are far from neutral tools for work because their use is mediated by modern institutions and an historical context that makes particular uses more viable than others.

Hazel describes the tensions that can exist when the nature of workplace relationships is complicated and/or blurred by coworkers and bosses who add or follow each other on social media, in this case Facebook:

A lot of my coworkers have added me on Facebook, which I'm not super with the buddy-buddy coworker relationships, but mostly that's fine. I'm like "okay, whatever. You added me on Facebook, that's not that weird." But my manager has also done that with a bunch of the people at the store. A bunch of us have her on Facebook, and I'm not as down with that. I think that it is a weird line to cross because why would you need to be that chummy with your employees? And also...it doesn't feel...on the level because she will be talking about things that



she's seen on other employee's walls and checking for discrepancies against the stories they've told her. And, well, that's shitty. I don't want you [the manager] on my Facebook (6 Mar. 2016).

Here Hazel describes a workplace in which Facebook is used both as a means of familiarity between coworkers, and as a means of overt surveillance on the part of the manager. In stating that they are okay with, but not enthusiastic, about coworkers adding them on Facebook, Hazel indicates a semi-permeable line that is acceptable, but not necessarily comfortable, for some to cross. In the case of the manager, crossing that line for Hazel creates an uncomfortable situation in which the personal lives of workers are visible to their employer, sometimes to their detriment. The fact that Hazel communicates discomfort and suspicion with adding their manager to Facebook while simultaneously stating that many employees at the store do have her on Facebook suggests a level of covert coercion in which employees might feel obligated to accept friend requests from the manager.

Hazel then describes a situation in which a specific employee's actions outside of work have work-related consequences as a direct result of having this manager on Facebook:

My one coworker was in the middle of a write-up process for an attitude problem basically, but it had thrown a bunch of her other work stuff into question and my manager had looked through her Facebook on one of the days she had called in sick and saw something that she thought confirmed that she couldn't have been where she said she was, and was like "Oh you wouldn't be joking about this on Facebook if you were actually in the hospital." And well, maybe, but if I have to call into work because I'm really ill or for any reason it seems not good that someone is then scrolling through my personal business to be like "but are you lying?" (6 Mar. 2016).

In this example the manager uses the surveillance capacities of Facebook available to her as a result of being Facebook friends with her employees to keep tabs on and even punish employees based on what they post, comment on or are tagged in. Numerous articles have been published in the popular press advising people to manage their online presence to avoid such situations, and countless examples have surfaced over the past decade detailing instances of people being fired over their social media use, many of which frame the situation

as the fault of the employee for not better managing their social media. Dylan Love's article for *Business Insider* called "17 People Who Were Fired for Using Facebook," Dan Fastenber's *Huffington Post* article "Facebook Firings: Top 10 Cases and the NLRB's New Guidelines," and Jessica Durando's *USA Today* article "Young woman fired over Twitter before starting job" are just a few of many examples. However, Hazel hits an excellent point in their last comment because there is something rather insidious about employers having access to their employee's personal life. And regardless of whether or not stories like Hazel's coworker are widespread, the constant potential of being visible to employers can impact worker's sense of self through the normalizing gaze of technological surveillance.

Other interviewees expressed a similar awareness of the role of social media in work-related surveillance and the subsequent tensions this can create. In discussing how he likes to keep up to date with coworkers and managers through personal social media accounts, Gustav also expresses an awareness of how such connections need to be managed to maintain appearances. He gives the example of how an image shared with coworkers on Snapchat depicting him in the store after hours lead to a face-to-face discussion with a manager about a rule infraction. He says that a coworker who was upset with him on a personal level informed the manager of his being in the store after hours, a violation of store policy. The manager then followed up with a conversation with Gustav reminding him of the rules:

There was one instance where I was behind the shop after hours and one of my coworkers had saw that on my Snapchat, so they reported to my manager who had a conversation with me about it and was like "you know you're not supposed to be in the shop after hours" (1 May. 2016).

Here a personal dispute between coworkers culminated in an explicit use of personal social media accounts for work-related surveillance purposes. In describing the manager's relationship to such situations Gustav describes a manager that is conscious of her employee's feelings while also being aware of her power:

My manager was trying to be nice about it, but she did want to make it into a serious conversation to make sure it doesn't happen. So she was trying to be a bit more conscientious about my feelings making sure that I wasn't upset about it. Though she did want to make sure it was a private conversation between

us...She...wasn't upset with the person who had told her. And I remember sometime prior she had mentioned how she has "eyes around the shop" but she didn't seem like she was upset with this person for tattling on me, which to be fair I get. But yeah, she wasn't quite upset with that person. She did want to nip it in the bud (1 May. 2016).

When asked for more detail on the manager's past comment about having "eyes around the shop" Gustav responded by saying:

What she means is that she does talk with the other staff members too. So other staff members will tell her things. And... I'd say...she was also saying it in jest, but part of it does have some actual seriousness to it. And I don't think it was pointed at me specifically. I would say she's got eyes in the shop for other staff members too (1 May. 2016).

Although Gustav's overall feelings about his work experiences are positive, he is nonetheless acutely aware of the power dynamics involved in even the personal relationships that he maintains with work contacts outside of work. The ever-present awareness of the potential for being watched is accentuated by the manager's explicit, albeit partially joking, comment about her surveillance capacities. This combined with the Snapchat incident above motivates Gustav to be more careful with how he presents himself on social media. When asked about this he responded by saying:

It does a little bit now. Just being a bit more conscientious about what is being posted on things like my Snapchat because that's a bit more framing what time I was doing things whereas if it's on Instagram or Facebook usually there is a delay in time as to when it happens. It's Snapchat where they can actually catch me for being behind the shop which normally doesn't happen too often (1 May. 2016).

Other interviewees choose to abstain from connecting with coworkers and managers on social media. For example, when asked if she is connected with people from work via personal social media accounts Diana responded by saying "I don't like having work people on my personal profile. That's just a personal preference because then they can more easily

talk to me about getting me to trade shifts” (8 Jun. 2016). Diana’s attempt at and desire to separate the sphere of work from that of non-work is indicated by her use of the words “work people” and “personal profile.” She uses these phrases to mark what is for her a contrast that she wants to maintain by not allowing the presence of coworkers on her personal social media accounts to blur this contrast. What Diana is engaged in is an attempt at preventing presence bleed by keeping some boundaries between herself and those she works with. Since connections between coworkers are used in her workplace to trade shifts, this boundary also serves as a line of defence for her personal time by making it slightly more difficult for coworkers to contact her about trading shifts. Other interviewees who are not connected in this way are also concerned the concept of personal space or personal business as the reason for this choice. Even for Hazel, who is connected, the personal nature of social media profiles is stated explicitly, while the desire to keep some semblance of separation between work and leisure is strongly implied. Nancy takes an even stronger stance on the matter by refusing to have Facebook altogether, let alone create an account for work purposes:

Yeah coworkers are all connected through social media. I just don’t...but yeah a bunch of them are. I’m not a big social media person anyway and I guess...that’s a part of my age. Facebook makes me uncomfortable for so many reasons so I’m not going to sign up for a Facebook account just...for such a slight reason. I don’t even have it to keep in touch with my family, so I’m not going to get it just to help out work (8 Jun. 2016).

Nancy’s comments about why she is not connected with coworkers points to a weariness of Facebook that very likely includes the surveillance capacities afforded by such social media platforms.

Social media is often falsely assumed to belong to the domain of leisure time. In practice it is a site of tension arising from the promise of social media to allow people to express themselves and engage in a diversity of types of sociality, and the reality of needing to maintain particular work appropriate appearances for bosses and coworkers who are connected through personal social media accounts. For example, Facebook’s about page states that “Facebook’s mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to

discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them” (“About”). Similarly, Twitter promises that users can “create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers” (“Company”). The promise of social media then is to help facilitate the expressions of people’s supposedly authentic selves by allowing them to discuss and connect to each other in ways meaningful to the individual user. But in practice the surveillance opportunities provided by such platforms can result in workers needing to be more edited in what they choose to put online lest a coworker or boss see something unflattering or even incriminating.

The work of Erving Goffman (1959) can help make sense of how this works. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* Goffman describes a concept of self that is a performance contingent upon the audience for which the performance is intended. The term performance for Goffman describes all situations in which a person engages in some level of impression management or situation management for the audience (17). For example, someone working a part time job in a retail store performs on the sales floor for an audience of customers by managing customers’ impressions of them self, coworkers and the store itself. During such performances people make use of what Goffman calls “expressive equipment” or “front” (22). To reinforce his use of “performance” and “front” Goffman uses the metaphor of stage performance in which there is a frontstage and backstage. The relation between spaces and stages is complex and contains a degree of fluidity, with any one particular space serving multiple functions of front and backstage simultaneously. Generally, the frontstage is the physical and social terrain on which performances take place (Goffman 22). The backstage exists in relation to ongoing performances on the frontstage, and is the terrain away from the audience in which the front of that performance is dropped (Goffman 112). Taking the example of retail workers again, the sales floor is the frontstage where the performance of the employee is ongoing, and the backstage is the breakroom where employees can drop the front of a helpful and patient employee.

Goffman’s description of performance, and front and backstage are useful for thinking about Hazel’s experience in relation to social media’s supposed authentic self. Hazel’s feelings of discomfort in coworkers adding them on social media can be framed in terms of a discomfort with audience members getting access to a backstage. Here Hazel’s coworkers and manager can be thought of as different, but related, audiences for which Hazel

performs impression and situation management. Hazel's coworkers are an audience in the sense that Hazel performs impression management to define them self as a coworker, the frontstage being the work environment and the backstage being Hazel's life outside of work. The combination of discomfort and acceptance Hazel expresses in having other coworkers add them on Facebook can be thought of as the audience of coworkers getting access to part of Hazel's backstage, thereby making it more difficult to drop that front. Hazel's performance as a coworker is then complicated by the intrusion of the audience in times and spaces otherwise defined by their absence.

The uncomfortable acceptance of this situation stems from the lower-stakes nature of this particular audience glimpsing this particular backstage. This is emphasized by the higher degree of discomfort towards a different audience accessing the same backstage. Here the manager is also an audience for which Hazel and their coworkers perform as employees. When the manager gets access to this backstage through social media the implications for not performing with the entrance of this audience member in mind are more severe because the manager has more power to punish employees for actions in this backstage area that are read as contradictions or breakages in performance. The stakes here are higher for employees because their behaviour in backstage areas are more at risk of intrusion from bosses, meaning that there is an extra imperative to keep up appearances outside of work in the form of self-editing on social media. This is not to say that this is an entirely new phenomenon. Before social media workers still faced the possibility of backstage intrusions. The difference now, however, is that the speed and scope of such intrusions are potentially much greater due to the reach of social media and related technologies.

Gustav's experience highlights this frontstage backstage relationship further. After having his actions in this backstage area exposed to his manager, Gustav is now more careful in this area. Like in Hazel's case, this backstage area is now also a frontstage where Gustav must continue to perform the work of impression management to maintain his image as a good employee. The difference here is that unlike Hazel who resents giving coworkers and managers access to this area of their life, Gustav welcomes it: "I enjoy it because I can keep up to date with them and they can keep up to date with me" (1 May. 2016). This is likely related to the fact that the overall positive tone of Gustav's interview in combination with his leadership positions at his company indicate that he is more invested in his work identity.

Unlike the other interviewees, Gustav did not talk about his personal social media accounts as being part of his personal business or private space. The conclusion can be drawn that he thinks of these accounts as being less private, or that he thinks of his work relationships and identity as sharing some of the same spaces as those from outside of work. This is in sharp contrast to Nancy and Diana, who both outright reject the idea of having coworkers and managers connected through personal social media accounts because they seek to maintain a stronger divide between work and private life.

Mobile devices are relevant here because they not only facilitate participation on social media platforms through internet access and apps, but they also further entrench the need for impression management. Through their surveillance capacities and their role in the current political-economic conditions mobile devices put added pressures on workers. Mobile devices have greatly contributed to the flexibilization and casualization of work by allowing workers to take their work outside the specific times and spaces of their workplace. In some cases, flexible schedules and work-from-home arrangements are offered and sought after to better accommodate the worker's lifestyle and improve work-life balance. For example, flexible and home working appeals to many parents because it gives them the opportunity to care for children while working from home or have more meaningful family time by taking advantage of a flexible schedule (Gregg 51). Such arrangements not only increase the amount of work people are doing, but also increase the amount of unpaid work people are doing by hiding it within the home (Gregg 54). There are numerous reasons why this is the case, one of which is the ability of mobile technology to make workers accessible even while they are not on the clock. Often this manifests in seemingly harmless ways, such as a supervisor or a co-worker calling during someone's off hours to ask a question or someone routinely checking work-related emails before bed.

It is the perception of such activities as "harmless" that makes them so insidious because the devaluation of these work activities, and even the decategorization of these activities as "not real work", helps naturalize and routinize such behaviours as part of everyday life. When an activity is considered to not belong to the category of work by the worker themselves it leaves no reason why they should consider getting paid for that time, or consider not doing it at all. Silvia Federici (2004), Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James (1972), Kathi Weeks (2011), and numerous other feminist scholars have pointed out that this

seemingly contradictory division between paid and unpaid labour is a necessary component of capitalism. As part of the Wages for Housework movement Dalla Costa and James argue that the unpaid labour of women in the home should be considered “work” just as the labour of a factory worker is considered work. They further argue that this largely invisible labour is necessary under capitalism because it ensures the reproduction of the entire system through the consumption of household commodities, and through the reproduction of labour power through unpaid caring work. Federici takes this argument further by stating that the disciplining of women and their bodies, and the appropriation of their forced labour was crucial to the development of capitalism during the early stages of primitive accumulation (16, 17). Primitive accumulation is a Marxist term that refers to the historical conditions that facilitate the development of capitalism (Federici 12). Federici places witch-hunts, the exclusion of women from waged work and the reconceptualization of women’s bodies as reproductive machines at the centre of the structural conditions of primitive accumulation in her analysis of the development of capitalism (12). Through a combination of political moves that stripped women of their autonomy, power over their bodies, and reproductive knowledge, women were relegated to the role of housemaker and mother (88, 91, 95).

Although this did not happen smoothly or without resistance, the naturalization of these roles for women over several centuries translate into a sphere of activity that was largely ignored until the feminist movements of the 60s and 70s pointed out the necessity and legitimacy of such activity as real work. Here it becomes evident that the division between paid and unpaid labour, and work and not work, is conditioned by the political-economic conditions in which those activities are performed. Federici describes a climate in which pre-existing gendered assumptions and inequalities were exacerbated and leveraged by authorities to address the political, economic and social unrest of the period following feudalism. Dalla Costa and James were working in a climate informed by the naturalized understandings of the gendered division of labour that is the legacy of the period Federici describes. As a result, Federici and Dalla Costa and James demonstrate the importance of historical context in considerations of such norms.

The above work in feminist political economy demonstrates that the division between work and not work is largely contingent on the norms of the context in which it is performed. As women’s reproductive and caring work is naturalized as part of human nature, it gets



incorporated into the common-sense understanding of how the world operates. Here the phrase “common-sense” is being used in the Gramscian sense, meaning a spontaneous and largely uncritical understanding of the world (Gramsci 641). Women’s labour is relegated to the sphere of women’s duties assigned by nature, and gets pushed out of the sphere of work. Weeks argues that what the Wages for Housework movement contributes to political economy is the recognition that the lines separating work and non-work become “increasingly obscure, as the same task could either be a waged or an unwaged activity” (142). Paolo Virno (2004) makes a similar case in his discussion of the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism when he argues that the dividing lines between “remunerated life and non-remunerated life” are “arbitrary, changeable, [and] subject to political decision making” (104). What Virno and Weeks point out is that the relationship between an activity and its financial compensation is not as clear-cut as sometimes assumed. Federici’s work demonstrates how these boundaries are malleable and politically contingent. Dalla Costa and James reveal the arbitrariness with which some activities are considered work while others are not. Just as women’s work in the home has been and still is subject to such conditions, other activities are beginning to fall into the same category of “not real work.” This is in part due to the way mobile devices have made it easier to take work outside the times and spaces of the workplace. As work tasks exist the sphere of the workplace, so too does the conception of those activities as actual work.

Gregg’s interview research of teleworkers in Australia reveals how workers sometimes do not perceive work tasks as actual work. For example, several interviewees were reluctant to consider certain work tasks as real work. In the case of checking email, an activity described by many participants to be time-consuming and tedious, it was described by one of Gregg’s participants as “not even work; It’s bullshit work” (46). Gregg argues that the sentiment that checking email is not real work is contradicted by the fact that many of her participants simultaneously felt compelled to check email on days off and outside of working hours in order to avoid being behind when they return to work. Clearly an activity that is thought of as necessary for the efficient completion of workplace tasks is real work. This contradiction illustrates nicely the processes described above. As mobile technology makes work available at all times, certain activities, like checking email at home, begin to fall into the category of not real work despite the continued necessity of these tasks. The mindless

nature of some work tasks, such as deleting email, can make them appear to be not real work, especially when completed at home and without compensation.

As David Lyon (2002) argues in *Everyday Surveillance: Personal Data and Social Classifications*, the ordering of social reality through categorizations made possible by surveillance help facilitate the production of behavioural norms (249). The diffusion of surveillance technologies in everyday life help integrate the normalizing gaze that accompanies such visibility. Drawing on concepts developed in Foucault's work on the panopticon, Lyon argues that no individual person or institution is responsible for the surveillance systems embedded in everyday life. Lyon further argues that the ensuing behavioural norms that are reinforced are those that tend to justify the institutions and organizations involved in the surveillance systems. Technologies of surveillance are integrated into everyday life and form a panoptic network of observation and classification designed to maintain organizational efficiency by keeping track of people (Lyon, "Everyday Surveillance" 242, 245; Lyon, "The World Wide Web of Surveillance" 94). This surveillance network socializes people into particular subjectivities in accordance with social norms, therefore constructing them as self-governing subjects, while also naturalizing the institutions that create the categories into which people are sorted (Lyon, "The World Wide Web of Surveillance" 101; Lyon, "Everyday Surveillance" 250).

This is connected with the concept of governmentality, which involves the cultivation of particular types of subjects that align their interests with those of dominant power structures (Crossman 896). The power of governmentality lies in its capacity to get citizens to govern themselves through self-reflexive action that produces a type of regulated freedom in which citizens participate in the technologies of power that govern them (Crossman 895; Rose and Miller 272). Michel Foucault (1982) argues that "[t]o govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others" (221). He adds that this form of governance functions only on free subjects. In order to govern by shaping the field of possibility, those being governed must be free in the sense that they choose their own actions within that field. That the field of possible action is structured is where governance takes place. Governmentality is therefore a form of governance that acts only on free subjects through their capacity to choose by shaping the choices that are available. It is through this

manipulation of available choices that free subjects are cultivated within the parameters of dominant power structures and how these subjects are encouraged to self-govern.

As workers are increasingly made visible to employers through their mobile devices they are also subject to working conditions in which it is often beneficial, and sometimes necessary, to adjust their behaviour to better match the expectations of the employer. This is especially relevant when those expectations are merely perceived or implied rather than explicitly outlined in company policy or job descriptions. The mobile aspect of this surveillance means that such behavioural adjustments can extend into leisure times and spaces as well as those explicitly intended for work. Such surveillance contributes to work cultures in which such behaviour modifications are the norm. This is exacerbated by the fact that the increasingly precarious and flexibilized nature of work creates an extra push for workers to cultivate in themselves behaviours and habits that are conducive to the aims of their employer due to the need to continually demonstrate employability.

The idea that employability is something that must be continually demonstrated can be framed in terms of Goffman's idea of life as a performance. As described above, Goffman argues that life is a performance in which people use various expressive tools to manage audiences' impressions. The sphere of work is one where this concept of performance is useful because the work of impression management extends beyond the job interview process. Employees must manage the impression that coworkers and bosses have of them in order to achieve certain work-related goals, such as remaining employed or getting a promotion. The task of remaining employed can involve demonstrating on a day-to-day basis one's value to the employer. For example, in discussing William H. Whyte's concept of the "organizational man" Melissa Gregg (2011) argues that today even "[o]rinary workers and the most junior employees show the habits and dispositions of Whyte's executives," (9) indicating that characteristics that were previously associated with upper management are beginning to trickle down to entry level employees. Whyte describes the executive as having an unhealthy devotion to work, and working excessive hours both in the office and at home (Gregg 8). The spread of mobile media and its accompanying normalizing gaze, in combination with increasingly precarious and accelerated work environments that celebrate long hours and personal sacrifice, contributes to the appearance of the characteristics of Whyte's executive in all manner of employees. This is because they position the worker as

perpetually available and capable of working beyond the confines of the office, while also making it a perceived requirement for the continued performance of employability.

Put another way, the increased potential for continuous work afforded by mobile devices contributes to the appearance of work related characteristics previously associated with upper management in a wider range of employees today. As argued by Gregg and others, the day-to-day routines and habits of the average employee now increasingly reflect the habits and orientation towards work previously associated with executives and upper management. Just as Whyte's executive is one who works long hours and works outside the times and spaces traditionally assigned to work, workers in entry level positions are now also working longer, harder and outside the workplace. This is in part due to the increased accessibility of the technologies necessary to work remotely to a broader range of people. Access to mobile devices has an accompanying ever-present potential for work. In a precarious and accelerated work environment this constant potential for work can take on the semblance of an opportunity for workers to create a buffer between themselves and unemployment by "going the extra mile." The idea here is that doing this extra work in the times and spaces made available by mobile devices is a way to prove one's value as an employee by performing in a way that highlights the attributes of a productive employee. As competition to acquire and keep jobs becomes more intense the ability to demonstrate in practice that one is an employee worth keeping becomes more important for many workers. Being available at all times and working extra outside of work are some ways of doing this that are greatly helped by mobile devices.

This is in part due to the relationship between governmentality and anxiety. Using the Foucauldian understanding of governmentality discussed above, Brenda Crossman (2013) discusses how anxiety can be a motivator in self-governance. Crossman argues that anxiety in combination with neoliberal governance that shifts responsibility for systemic risk from institutions to individuals creates the conditions in which individuals engage in self-management to manage perceived risks. She argues that the role of expert opinion is important because while experts offer guidance on self-management, they also tend to reproduce norms of self-management that are conducive to existing power structures. Such expert opinions help filter the range of available options in the field of action while simultaneously encouraging people to take responsibility for their self-development. The

anxiety of trying to remain employed, obtain clients or contracts, get promotions, and a host of other work-related pressures can motivate workers to seek the type of governmental expert advice that might give them an edge over others. In this way workers govern themselves in accordance with dominant power structures, namely neoliberal capitalism, by cultivating in themselves the attributes conducive to more efficient participation in those power structures. In the cases of social media and mobile media, this involves taking on the characteristics previously associated with upper management to maintain or better one's position in a difficult economic climate.

Anthony Giddens (1991) also touches on the role of risk and anxiety in the construction of the self. He argues that modernity is characterized by the self-reflexive management of the self to mediate against the risks inherent in modern institutions. As modernity disrupts the patterns of tradition, it creates conditions in which individuals make mandatory choices from a broader and more diverse range of options. Giddens argues that these choices are accompanied by the risks of uncertain futures. The management of these risks tends to be informed by the recommendation of experts through which knowledge about the physical, technical and social world are filtered. As such knowledge is filtered through systems of expertise, such as medical research, people make self-reflexive choices in the cultivation of various lifestyles to manage the risks that define modern institutions. In the sphere of mobile devices and social media, there is an abundance of books, tutorial videos, editorials and courses dedicated to providing instruction for professional success through self-management online. For example, popular business magazines such as *Forbes* and *Business Insider* regularly offer content oriented towards individual personal development. Such articles tend to be written by or under the guidance of business "experts" that offer the kind of filtered knowledge discussed by Giddens and Crossman.

An example of this logic appears in *Euntpenuer.com*. In an article called "5 Time Management Techniques Worth Using" consultant and business coach Dan S. Kennedy advises readers to "[p]rofit from 'odd lot' time," by taking advantage of mobile devices to avoid wasting time. He states that "[t]here is no excuse to simply waste time while waiting in an airport, stuck in traffic, parked in a reception room" ("5 Time Management Techniques Worth Using"). Kennedy goes on to give the example of famous author Scott Turow who wrote a novel entirely during his daily train commute to and from work to illustrate how the

“[d]isciplined use of the time everybody else wastes can give you an edge” (“5 Time Management Techniques Worth Using”). Here an expert in the field of business management offers readers advice on how to make more efficient use of time in order to excel in the professional world. In doing so he offers filtered knowledge that focuses on strategies to maximize the use of time, rather than alternative approaches that emphasise, for example, the importance of downtime for mental health. Kennedy forms part of larger expert systems that cultivate the field of possible action in a particular way. Those looking for advice for time management encounter expertise oriented towards using time for work while dismissing the potential leisure of lounging at an airport. The field of action for successful professionals, then, is skewed in favour of an economy that demands more work and more efficient work, even when that work takes place outside the office.

The above discussion takes place within the context of an economic climate supposedly characterized by freedom, creativity and autonomy for individual workers. It will be argued, however, that this is not necessarily the case. Harry Braverman (1974) discusses how during Fordism the organization of work in industrial factories shifted towards highly monitored and controlled production processes with a mind to increasing efficiency. He argues that this means-ends rationalization involved removing the agency of the worker in favour of technologically monitored and automated systems in which workers serve a predetermined and calculated function, rather than directing the production process themselves. Through factory-floor supervisors and limitations built into the equipment of the production process workers lost the control over their actions that exists in craft production. Instead of producing a commodity from start to finish, and making decisions throughout the process Braverman argues that workers in Fordist factories perform the same monotonous task all day, participating only in a fraction of the production process. The rationalization of production under Fordism puts workers in a position of overt loss of control, not only of the production of the commodity in question, but also of the knowledge involved in craft production. Not to discount the self-awareness of the workers themselves, worker’s movements and unions have demanded, among other things, better working conditions and more worker autonomy.

Emerging from Karl Marx’s critique of alienated labour are calls for a dealienation of labour to liberate humankind's true creative capacity. One such call comes from what Kathi

Weeks (2005) calls romantic-humanism, which argues that since work is the defining characteristic of what makes people human it should be thought of as an end in itself. Here the liberation of work from the alienating forces of capitalism is necessary for the full actualization of humanity. Supporters of this position propose to organize work based on principles of cooperation in which the individuals themselves are in control of organizing and planning (Weeks 2005: 115). Similarly, David Spencer (2009) outlines the recent intellectual tradition of pro-work sentiment. He identifies a number of theorists, such as William Goodwin and Charles Fourier, who argue that work is intrinsically good, but has been corrupted by capitalism through the lack of worker control over production, and private property (33, 36). The theorists he discusses all advocate the building of a society in which work can be pursued as an end in itself, rather than as a means to private profit (33). What Weeks and Spencer make evident is the pervasiveness of the idea of freely pursued and creative work as the centre of self-realization. This incompatibility is demonstrated by capital's appropriation of 'dealienated' models of workplace management to extend and deepen control while simultaneously blurring the distinctions between work and leisure. This process is most notable in the enthusiastic adoption of increased worker autonomy by management culture, which indicates the inadequacy of simplistic calls for 'better' work in challenging capitalism.

Management literature in recent years have taken up such concerns and integrated them into management techniques. Central to many such techniques is the concept of making work “fulfilling” for the worker, the idea being that workers will produce more and perform better if they legitimately enjoy their work, or at least believe that they enjoy their work. Giving workers the ability to make choices, contribute ideas and work in an environment that encourages creativity are among such techniques. For example, global editor in chief for *TechRepublic.com* Jason Hiner advises managers to adopt a number of techniques that emphasize communicating trust to workers while cultivating their creative thinking skills and explicitly blurring the boundaries between work and leisure. Hiner advocates for the elimination of strict start and end times for the working day along with managers making mobile work available to their employees. He states that “[w]hen you manage salaried knowledge workers, you should almost never have rigid clock-in/clock-out times...Provide them with the tools to access their work remotely, when needed. Then let them manage their

own time” (“10 Tips for leading your team to peak performance”). Instead of advocating for the traditional nine to five office set-up, Hiner encourages managers to allow flexibility by using language reminiscent of industrial production. The phrase “clock-in/clock-out times” evokes the rigidity of now old fashioned punch clocks in the factory, an image that is likely not what the managers of so-called knowledge workers want to instill in their employees. This is especially true because a lot of work now is supposed to be creative, autonomous and liberated from the exploitative and inhuman conditions of industrial labour; an image that is incompatible with the rigidity of clock-in/clock-out times. Other advice Hiner offers includes assigning people to projects that they will feel passionate about, encouraging brainstorming sessions and asking for employees’ thoughts to create an atmosphere of openness.

Popular ways of conceptualizing management techniques promote the importance of cultivating worker happiness and commitment to the job. By giving workers more control, or at least the appearance of more control, over the work that they do managers aim to instill feelings of autonomy, freedom and empowerment in employees that will instill and solidify an identification of workers with their work and employer. Here the goal is to get workers to identify with their work and align their values with those of management, and the company more broadly, making the job part of their identity. Their performance at work then becomes an expression of their character and integrity, thereby creating at least one impetus for workers to excel, especially in an economic climate in which personal branding and reputation is of utmost importance for securing and keeping employment and upward mobility. This is coupled with the fact that although workers on a very superficial level appear to have more freedom and autonomy than those of decades past, workers are actually subject to just as much surveillance and discipline as in the Fordist era, the difference being how, where and when that surveillance is conducted. The management techniques advocated by Hiner and others helps facilitate the reach of new modes of surveillance by encouraging the use of new technologies.

This is not to say that certain aspects of new management models, social media or mobile devices have not improved the working lives of those involved. What this discussion has attempted to show, however, is that the introduction of social media and mobile devices into people’s working lives comes with certain consequences. With social media the audiences for whom workers must perform employability have a new and extended reach



into backstage areas. This adds an extra need for workers to at least consider their potential audiences when using social media for leisure. This is coupled with mobile devices that also make all times and spaces potentially work-times and work-spaces. The shifting of some work tasks into non-work times and spaces contributes to the perception of such activities as not real work despite their enduring necessity. The motivation to do this extra work stems in part from attempts to manage and mediate against the systemic risks for which workers are made individually responsible. As workers choose from the range of available options filtered through experts it becomes a viable option for more workers to perform in a way that is conducive to the aims of the employer in order to demonstrate their value as an employee. This can involve adopting the attributes previously associated with those in executive positions. All of this is happening within a management culture that according to claims to offer more freedom and autonomy while delivering more, albeit less overt, surveillance and control (237). It is important to keep these relations in mind to prevent simplistic understandings of such processes as natural or neutral take hold.

## Conclusion

What role do smartphones play in the management of flexible employment? (R1)

The interviews revealed that smartphones play two major roles in the management of flexible employment. First, the role of smartphones in the surveillance of workers outside of work through personal social media accounts was so evident that it was given its own chapter. Here a number of participants describe their relationship to social media and work-related contacts on personal accounts. Gregg's presence bleed is evident here, along with a form of boundary bleed in which the divisions between work and non-work are themselves bleeding into each other. Not only is the presence of work bleeding into other times and spaces, but whether there are times and spaces outside of work is becoming less clear as work becomes rooted in personal life in a way that makes such boundaries very unclear. This makes firm separations extremely difficult, as is the case for the study participants with work contacts on personal accounts. For some participants there is pressure to join company groups, promote their stores to friends, and/or add or follow work contacts on personal accounts. While not all study participants choose to participate in these types of work activities, those who did expressed an awareness of how their actions outside the times and spaces of work can have consequences at work. Those who do not participate similarly express such an awareness citing reasons ranging from a desire to keep work separate from their personal life to being uncomfortable with certain social media platforms altogether.

Second, smartphones play an important role in maintaining workers' availability and adaptability. This happens when employers use employees' ability to contact them at any time of day to meet scheduling requirements on an as-needed basis. The interviews show that this happens in addition to formal scheduling practices, and often supplements or replaces the seemingly outdated practice of scheduling on-call shifts. Instead of workers being available for a set period only, they are available at all times. Even when workers are not contacted or choose not to answer their phone or messages, many interviewees describe there being a degree of stress and anxiety about the possibility of being called into work.

These two roles taken together mean that the scale and scope of the visibility and availability of workers to their employers is accelerating. Instead of time off being time free from work pressures, workers must deal with inconsistent and often short notice for

scheduling and the ever-present potential to be contacted. Those who are also connected to work contacts through personal social media must perform impression management either by being aware of how their actions outside of work would be perceived by coworkers and managers if seen on social media, or managing privacy settings.

How do part-time retail workers use smartphones for work outside working hours? (R2)

Participants describe using their smartphones in a variety of ways, most of which were related to schedule management. Participants discuss using their smartphones to access their schedules online or through email, and explain how they are in contact with coworkers and employers for schedule changes. These schedule changes primarily take the form of employers calling or emailing to request that workers come in earlier, to offer extra shifts on an as-needed basis, and to inform workers of shift cuts. Similarly, participants describe having contact with coworkers to trade or offload shifts. Here scheduling is a do-it-yourself activity in which workers sometimes must find someone to replace them if they cannot come into work, a practice that used to be the responsibility of the manager. Finally, one participant describes using her smartphone, or rather strategically not using her smartphone, to avoid contact when the extra work on offer is not desired.

Another way participants describe using their smartphones for work is to stay informed of campaigns, sales and other information pertinent to their work duties. For some this takes the form of reading emails sent by management detailing campaigns, sales and special events. For others this involves using company resource databases to self-educate on products and campaigns. Finally, one participant mentions their employer encouraging employees to use personal social media accounts to promote the store and its sales to increase store traffic. In all of these cases work outside of the workplace takes the form of workers managing the knowledge they need to perform their duties at work more effectively. Even though many participants state that their employer either prefers that they do this work during working hours so that they will get paid for their time, or that their employer specifically schedules time for these activities, many participants still choose to do these activities outside of work. Their reasons here range from it being too busy at work to realistically get these activities done to it being more convenient to do it outside of work. Hazel provides an important reminder that these jobs are part-time minimum wage jobs, and as a result the

degree of participation expected or encouraged is sometimes disproportionate to the importance the job has for many workers outside of contributing to basic income requirements.

What is the impact of just-in-time scheduling on workers' perception and use of time? (R3)

The interviews reveal that participants' perception and use of time is flexible and adaptable, rather than rigid and determined by strict routines. Many participants seem to lack routine altogether, instead preferring to use time based on what is needed at that moment. Participants also described feelings of anxiety or stress during time outside of work due to the possibility of being called by their employer. For most participants, the main impact of just-in-time scheduling is in being able to make plans. With often little notice given for schedules and the constant potential to be contacted by work, participants describe experiencing frustration when trying to make plans. When plans are made, or when trying to relax, there is a lingering anxiety about the potential for being called into work.

How does the experience of this kind of work differ along the lines of gender based on differing gender role expectations? (R4)

Due to the demographic composition of the participants, this question could not be adequately addressed. With three women, one man, and one genderqueer person, it was impossible to determine if differences in smartphone use were coincidental. All but one of the participants are young, live alone and/or do not have or live with children, which may influence whether or not concepts such as the parallel shift or double shift are applicable. Finally, many of the participants are queer and/or in non-traditional relationships, such as polyamorous relationships. This makes it likely that their circumstances are different from the participants in Crowe and Middleton's work.

This project reveals a number of areas for further study. Rather than being a straightforward exploration of the above questions, this research took a number of interesting turns. In some ways this research raises more questions than it answers, which is a good indicator for this particular area's potential for future research. First, this research reveals the need for industry-wide quantitative data on the distribution of on-call shifts to determine if this type of scheduling is being replaced by the more informal scheduling practices indicated

by this research. In this research on-call shifts are framed by some participants as being undesirable for workers. Participants also discuss how their employers circumvent the need for on-call shifts by using informal just-in-time scheduling practices. The quantitative research suggested here would provide broader insight into whether or not employers are getting rid of on-call shifts, and at what point in the process the industry as a whole is now.

Similarly, more research is needed to determine if Diana's comment about her strategies to avoid work contact are as widespread as she suggests they are. If they are it means that workers on a large scale are using their knowledge of their employers' expectations and the limits they will accept to engage in work duties outside of work times and spaces more on their own terms. As this project indicates, workers are not oblivious or passive to the political-economic process that contribute to presence bleed, and they use their awareness of this to resist and cope as they best see fit. Further research in this area would add much needed depth and texture to existing literature on worker resistance, particularly part-time retail workers' resistance. Of particular interest for this future research could be how workers resist to give themselves a bit of a buffer from work while also still cultivating the image of an ideal worker, as described by Diana.

Ana's interview provides an interesting perspective because she not only works part-time in retail, but she is also an employer of part-time employees. Insights gained from her interview into the employer's perspective on availability expectations need further exploration. Future research could investigate what employers think about the availability expectations they have for employees, and whether these expectations are consistent with what employees perceive those expectations to be. Such research would complement this project, and others like it, because taken together these areas of focus would provide a fuller picture of how employees and managers in retail experience presence bleed. This is important because while employees are on the receiving end of much of this extra contact, it is the managers that seem to be in charge of whether or not this contact happens in the first place. Such research would also provide insight into whether there are external pressures that contribute to manager's availability expectations for their employees, and how they experience these pressures if they do exist.

As this body of knowledge continues to grow, it can inform policy makers as they attempt to keep labour laws relevant in an environment of change and flexibility. Qualitative research about the experiences of workers is important because it provides much needed context and depth to our understanding of life as a part-time worker in Canada. Having a better understanding of these experiences can help policy makers by highlighting some of the tensions that exist in part-time retail workers' lives to create more complex discussions about what is needed on a policy level. For example, it can be tempting to want to prevent employers from contacting employees on their days off, but since participants in this research discuss sometimes wanting these extra shifts for the money the situation is too complicated for this approach to be effective. Having this extra information indicates that more creative approaches are needed, and more research in this area will provide the detail necessary for tackling these complex situations.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Non-Medical Research Ethics Board Approval



Research Ethics

### Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board NMREB Full Board Initial Approval Notice

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Sarah Roberts

**Department & Institution:** Information and Media Studies, Western University

**NMREB File Number:** 107192

**Study Title:** Studying Temporalities: The Construction of Flexible Gendered Subjectivities through Part-time Retail Workers' Use of Smartphone Technology

**Sponsor:**

**NMREB Initial Approval Date:** December 07, 2015

**NMREB Expiry Date:** December 07, 2016

**Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:**

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Revised Western University Protocol		2015/10/23
Instruments	Interview	2015/10/23
Revised Letter of Information & Consent		2015/10/13
Advertisement	Recruitment Flyer	2015/10/13

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PIIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ethics Officer, on behalf of Riley Hinson, NMREB Chair

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information:  Anita Ziaee  Nicole Kanki  Grace Kelly  Alice Metherell  N/A  \_\_\_\_\_

*This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.*

## Curriculum Vitae

**Name:** Jessica Fanning

**Post-secondary Education and Degrees:** Wilfrid Laurier University  
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada  
2010-2014 H.B.A.

**Honours and Awards** Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)  
Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master’s  
2014

Ontario Graduate Scholarship  
2015

**Related Work Experience** Research Assistant  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
2013-2016

Teaching Assistant  
The University of Western Ontario  
2014-2016