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The Challenge of Consumer Diversity in Servicescapes: An Investigation of Consumer and Service Provider Experiences

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THE CHALLENGE OF CONSUMER DIVERSITY IN SERVICESCAPES: AN INVESTIGATION OF CONSUMER AND SERVICE PROVIDER EXPERIENCES

by

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While consumer diversity continues to grow in importance, evidence suggests that firms have yet to align their thoughts and activities with diverse consumers' needs. This is especially true for consumers who have a hidden stigmatized identity. On the one hand, consumers with such concealable stigmatized identities must make the decision to reveal or conceal their identity in a variety of situations, including service environments. On the other hand, many service providers are working to offer inclusive service environments yet struggle to do so. Therefore, this ethnographic dissertation has two objectives: to 1) conceptualize practices unique to consumers with a concealable stigmatized identity as they interact (or not) in the marketplace, and 2) document the decision-making process of service providers who seek to create and maintain an inclusive servicescape.

Concerning the first objective, I sampled bi+ consumers; they make up the largest portion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community, yet experience stigma in many service environments. Thus, bi+ consumers provide a rich context for understanding how consumers with a concealable stigmatized identity experience service environments. Findings suggest that bi+ consumers conceal or reveal their stigmatized identity, at individual and collective levels. Due to their concealable identity, bi+ consumers co-create and map spaces that offer them refuge. As a result, this study

examines an understudied phenomenon, consumer disclosure of such identities to service providers.

Regarding the second objective, I sampled service providers who demonstrate some commitment to inclusion. Service providers who offer inclusive servicescapes are becoming more common. Findings suggest that service providers create an inclusive "vibe" with their physical layout, point-of-sale communications and interactions, and external communications. Service providers maintain inclusivity by dealing with ongoing challenges to their inclusive space. They do this by hiring diverse staff, training them on inclusion, and coping with the unpredictable. When a challenge occurs, service providers can successfully recover their inclusive space by taking a community-based approach to recovery.

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CHAPTER 1: THE PHENOMENON OF INTEREST

Understanding consumer diversity has become increasingly important for firms (Henderson and Rank-Christman 2016; Henderson and Williams 2013; Kumar 2018). In the United States and many other countries, firms need to interact with a growing number of consumers from different ethnic backgrounds, gender identities, age cohorts, and religious affiliations, just to name a few possible variations.

However, while marketers have made some progress toward incorporating diversity in marketing efforts, there still is frequent misalignment between these efforts and diverse consumers' needs and preferences (Henderson and Williams 2013; Lamberton 2019; Sandikci and Ger 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). This misalignment affects a wide range of businesses and consumers. In a case that circulated widely in the popular press, some gay customers had service denied by a small bakery on the basis of the entrepreneur's religious beliefs (Liptak 2017; Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission 2018). In another well-known situation, some black customers were arrested in a Starbucks store when the manager thought they had malicious intentions, whereas they were in fact only waiting for a business associate (Stevens 2018).

How do such situations impact consumers' participation in the marketplace? Moreover, how can marketers do a better job of engaging with diverse consumers when they want to do so as part of their positioning? To take up these issues, this dissertation engages with the notion of diversity, defined as the "real or perceived differences among people in race, ethnicity, sex, age, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, religion, work and family status, weight and appearance, and other identity-based

attributes that affect their interactions and relationships" (Henderson and Rank-Christman 2016, 148). More specifically, this dissertation takes up the fact that many differences among people are sources of stigma. As a vast literature in the social sciences shows, many of these differences are socially constructed as discrediting (Goffman 1963). Often, historical processes structure these differences into cultural hierarchies that assign differential value to these distinctions. Through these processes, some differences become a stigma, a characteristic that is socially constructed as discrediting, setting an individual as an inferior "outsider" and leading to experiences such as stereotyping and discrimination of entire groups of consumers (Goffman 1963). In order to fully understand consumer diversity, marketers thus need to be attuned to the experiences of consumer identities that are stigmatized.

The current literature on consumption and stigma focuses largely on stigmas that are readily apparent or unable to be concealed. For example, current literature provides an understanding of the experiences of racial minority consumers, as they experience and manage the stigma they face in the marketplace (Bone, Christensen, and Williams 2014; Crockett 2017; Crockett and Wallendorf 2004). Also present in the literature is an understanding of the limited choice faced by the stigma of being overweight (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Lastly, research has also focused on the experiences of consumers with physical disabilities, and a desire to experience normalcy in the marketplace (Baker 2006). Such *unconcealable forms of stigmas* are readily apparent during marketplace interactions and have an impact on the service experience for both consumers and service providers.

Relatively absent from the literature on consumption and stigma is research on *concealable stigmatized identities*—or those identities that are not readily apparent and for which consumers still face discrimination over (Quinn and Earnshaw 2011). Concealable stigmas may be aspects about an individual, such as having low literacy skills (Adkins and Ozanne 2005), or about a close other, such as having a family member who suffers from a mental illness. Concealable stigmas may also extend to identities or labels of oneself or close others, such as being an alcoholic, having a criminal background, or being a sexual minority, such as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

Since stigmas are socially constructed, they often change over time and are experienced differently across various contexts. For example, an alcoholic may regularly have opportunities to reveal their stigmatized identity at meetings and as they atone for their former actions with loved ones. However, in seeking to find gainful employment, one may choose to conceal this identity. The same is true for consumption spaces. For example, attendance at an afterwork happy hour may be expected or useful for an individual to attend to network with others in their company. A recovering alcoholic may make the decision to conceal their stigmatized identity by either not attending the event or attending and experiencing some discomfort by being surrounded by imbibers or in answering questions about why they are not also drinking. This same individual may reveal their identity and experience possible stigma, or acceptance and relief at being accepted. Each decision comes with tradeoffs for the individual with a concealable stigmatized identity. As such, an investigation of how consumers with concealable stigmas make the decision to reveal or conceal their concealable stigmatized identities

provides an important area of study for expanding our understanding of how consumers perceive and experience marketplace inclusion.

Therefore, the first objective of this dissertation is to identify the distinctive ways through which consumers with a concealable stigmatized identity experience the marketplace. Specifically, I focus on these consumers' experiences in constructed environments where a service experience takes place, also called servicescapes (Bitner 1992). Servicescapes are an important marketing context in which to study the experiences of consumers with concealable stigmatized identities because environmental elements often play such a big role in experiences of stigma. Furthermore, servicescapes are also the setting for consumer and service provider interactions. When a stigmatizing event occurs, this necessarily impacts the nature of the service experience for the consumer and service provider, which differs from the experience of stigma in other marketing contexts such as advertisements where the creators are not present to handle consumer concerns.

In keeping a focus on servicescapes, the second objective of this dissertation is to understand the experiences of service providers in constructing inclusive service environments for those with stigmatized identities. Much of the research on servicescapes focuses on the effects of store design on consumer experiences (Arnould, Price, and Tierney 1998; Dagger and Danaher 2014; Girard et al. 2019). Relatedly, another literature stream considers how consumers experience these elements as they pursue identity goals (Arnould and Thompson 2005; Veresiu and Giesler 2018), take part in play (Kozinets et al. 2004; Seregina and Weijo 2017), and become emotionally attached to the retail venue (Bradford and Sherry 2015; Debenedetti, Oppewal, and Arsel 2013; Visconti

et al. 2010). While literature currently addresses how and why consumers engage with servicescapes, little is known about the motivations and challenges of constructing inclusive servicescapes from the perspective of service provider. Indeed, much of the current literature on servicescape design focuses on profit-oriented outcomes, not those associated to well-being.

This dissertation, thus, combines consumer and managerial perspectives to illuminate two underexplored phenomena: 1) how consumers with concealable stigmatized identities experience servicescapes, and 2) how managers of these servicescapes can meet the needs of these consumers by providing a more inclusive environment. These two topics have implications for marketing academics, practitioners, and policy makers.

THEORETICAL IMPORTANCE

Consumer research has mostly considered "hidden" stigmas that consumers try to conceal at all costs (Adkins and Ozanne 2005). It has also occasionally examined consumer stigma experiences that are tied to a specific ritual, such as Christmas celebrations (Weinberger 2015). The current project expands the ways in which stigma is conceptualized in consumer theory to consider the everyday, lived experiences of consumers with a concealable stigma. In particular, I examine how consumers with a concealable stigmatized identity go about making the decision to conceal or reveal their identity in servicescapes, and how they go about doing so.

In addition, this dissertation contributes to the literature on retail services by investigating how servicescapes contribute to consumer well-being. In so doing, this dissertation answers numerous calls within the literature on transformative services

research to examine the ability of service environments to minimize and alleviate suffering (Anderson et al. 2013; Fisk et al. 2018; Ostrom et al. 2015). Through the current project, I highlight the ways in which servicescapes can create safer spaces for consumers to express themselves and feel respected in the marketplace. This is in line with psychological research that demonstrates a positive impact on well-being when an individual reveals a stigmatized identity and is accepted (Chaudoir and Fisher 2010; Quinn and Earnshaw 2011). Scant research exists on how servicescapes impact consumer experiences of stigma beyond consumers' desire to feel welcome and comfortable in the space (Baker, Holland, and Kaufman-Scarborough 2007; Rosenbaum 2005). The current dissertation extends this literature by examining how servicescapes enable consumers to reveal their stigmatized identities, a transformative act that has been shown to reduce short- as well as long-term well-being (Chaudoir and Fisher 2010). As consumers seek service experiences to fulfill a variety of goals, it is important to extend the current work on inclusion in servicescapes to consumers with a hidden or concealable stigma.

MANAGERIAL IMPORTANCE

This dissertation provides recommendations for service providers who seek to create and maintain an inclusive servicescape. In particular, I interrogate the notion of "safe space," which is extremely current in today's marketplace as well as society (Pickett 2016). Currently, managers and owners of servicescapes who seek to offer a safe space for all consumers lack guidance as to how to do so successfully. Safe spaces are different from places that aim to make customers feel "welcome" (Baker et al. 2007; Rosenbaum 2005) in that safe spaces offer consumers a space of refuge, free from suffering. The

notion of a safe market space has yet to be investigated, but the importance of inclusively designed service environments has been proposed as an area necessary to study (Fisk et al. 2018).

While a single servicescape "cannot be everything to everyone," or as Baker and colleagues (2007) put it, it must balance "the needs of the many with the needs of the few" (p. 170), it is important for managers and entrepreneurs to be aware of who feels safe in their spaces and what they can do to rectify situations in which consumers do not experience a servicescape as such. In this vein, I provide an ideal service blueprint (Bitner, Ostrom, and Morgan 2008) for managers who seek to create and maintain inclusive servicescapes. This resource will enable firms to better design, deliver, and market their servicescapes more effectively to diverse consumer groups.

POLICY IMPORTANCE

The concealable nature of the stigmatized identity creates a challenge for all parties involved: the consumer must face the decision of whether to conceal or reveal their identity, the service provider must serve a customer based on incorrect of incomplete knowledge of their needs, and policy makers may not be aware of such stigmas. Therefore, the proposed project will provide recommendations to public policy makers and others working in the public policy space to better meet the needs of consumers with concealable stigmatized identities and service providers who seek to serve them by providing inclusive servicescapes.

This dissertation considers the type of policy that may be most effective at protecting both consumers with concealable stigmatized identities as well as service providers. Also,

this dissertation offers recommendations for non-profit organizations that work with consumers with stigmatized identities.

DISSERTATION OUTLINE

In chapter 2, I review relevant literature related to concealable stigmatized identities and servicescapes. In this chapter, I also develop the two objectives of the current dissertation in line with each of these concepts and put forth research questions. In chapter 3, I justify and outline the ethnographic methodology undertaken for this dissertation. In chapter 4, I provide findings for both objectives of this dissertation. Specifically, part 1 of this chapter includes findings relevant to consumers, and part 2 provides findings relevant to service providers. In chapter 5, I reflect on my findings and elaborate on implications of the current dissertation for marketing theory, managers, and policymakers. Lastly, I include an appendix that includes interview guides, Institutional Review Board consent forms, a table with key terms and definitions, a review of risk factors affecting the focal consumer sample for this dissertation, relevant demographic information of all informants, a table of findings, and an ideal service blueprint for inclusion.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

STIGMA AND CONSUMPTION

Stigma refers to a visible or invisible aspect that is used by some to demarcate others as "outsiders." The ideology behind a theory of stigma is that "the undesired differentness" that one possesses is used to justify differential treatment such as discrimination or punishment (Goffman 1963). In other words, individuals who have an attribute or identity that clashes with what is socially constructed as "normal" are treated as social outsiders because who they are does not align with what mainstream society expects of them. This pattern of being treated as a social deviant or outsider causes considerable harm to the person with a stigmatized identity. This continual denial of cultural and social membership results in susceptibility to a number of important risk factors such as poor physical and mental health, poverty, among others (Lamont 2018; MAP 2016; see Table 2).

The literature on stigma and consumption mainly focuses on unconcealable, or highly visible, stigmas. Studies within this literature focus on the experiences of consumers who have a physical disability (Baker 2006; Baker et al. 2007), interlocking stigmas of race and class (Bone et al. 2014; Crockett 2017; Crockett and Wallendorf 2004), are fat (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), and who face reduced choice due to their visible religious affiliation (Sandikci and Ger 2010). These studies reveal how consumers navigate market spaces that are not designed for them (Baker 2006; Baker et al. 2007), manage stigma when it is enacted upon them and the resulting lack of resources (Bone et al. 2014), communicate pride in their identity through consumptive displays (Crockett 2017),

navigate a segregated marketplace (Crockett and Wallendorf 2004), and pressure market actors for greater choice (Sandikci and Ger 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013).

While we know a great deal about how consumers with unconcealable stigmas cope with this condition, we know much less about how consumers with stigmatized identities that are able to be concealed or revealed experience the marketplace. Building upon Goffman's (1963) conceptualization of stigma, Quinn and Earnshaw (2013) define concealable stigmatized identity as those "that can be hidden from others that are social devalued and negatively stereotyped" (p. 40).

Social psychologists have found evidence of some distinct experiences among those with concealable stigmas in relation to those with visible stigmas (Quinn and Earnshaw 2013). When individuals with a concealable stigmatized identity are able to reveal their identity and this is a positive experience for them, they experience a boost to their well-being including self-esteem, lessened chronic fear of disclosure, and an increased level of trust in others (Chaudoir and Fisher 2010; Quinn and Earnshaw 2013). However, if these revealing experiences are negative, individuals take a hit to their self-esteem, they are more fearful of revealing, and exhibit lower trust in others.

In consumer research, only a few studies consider the experiences of consumers with concealable stigmas. For example, Kozinets (2001) investigates Star Trek fans to understand how mass media shapes the experiences of consumers with stigmatized identities, in this case that of being a "nerd," specifically a Trekkie. Trekkies consume Star Trek to escape from their everyday lives, while often downplaying their membership within this subculture of consumption. Indeed, this downplay is relevant to understanding

concealable stigmas. This allows Trekkies to effectively "pass" as mainstream or non-stigmatized consumers, and avoid stigma associated with being a Trekkie.

Another study of consumers with concealable stigmatized identities is Adkins and Ozanne (2005), which examine how low literate consumers get their needs met in the marketplace. The authors delineate their coping strategies and reveal the extent to which they self-identify with the label of "low-literate." In doing so, the authors note, "[t]he most important coping skill employed, though, was the ability to act like a literate person" (p. 99). The authors find that participants largely enact a "conceal at all costs" model to get their consumption needs met while continuing to conceal their low-level of literacy. Importantly, this study considers this approach in a specific servicescape, the grocery store. Participants share strategies for memorizing the layout of the store, including the locations of their favorite products. In this way, the grocery store servicescape offers environmental cues for low-literate consumers to utilize to meet their consumption needs all the while continuing to conceal their stigma.

A third representative study of consumers with concealable stigmatized identities is Weinberger (2015). This paper explores how consumers who do not celebrate a dominant ritual, Christmas, manage social relationships and group boundaries with celebrants and non-celebrants, protect their own identities, and (dis)engage with elements of the dominant ritual. Weinberger (2015) finds that non-celebrants must decide whether to disclose the fact that they do not celebrate a dominant ritual to close others such as neighbors, extended family, and work associates. "[T]hose who do not celebrate are faced with a complex set of emotions and choices as they are often included, by default, in the celebration" (p. 398). Non-celebrants often make trade-offs between goals related to

managing relationships and goals related to protecting their own identity. Thus, non-celebrants have the ability to conceal their ritual-based identity and pass as "mainstream" or celebrant consumers, but at a considerable cost to themselves.

This dissertation builds upon these studies in several ways. First, this dissertation moves our understanding beyond mass media critiques (Kozinets 2001), by considering how consumers with concealable stigmatized identities participate in servicescapes. Second, this dissertation explores how consumers with concealable stigmatized identities make the decision to conceal or reveal their identity, and the tradeoffs inherent in that decision. No matter which decision they make, consumers make tradeoffs related to their overall well-being. Third, this dissertation theorizes everyday consumer practices of concealing and revealing. Previous work has mainly focused on regularly concealing (Adkins and Ozanne 2005) and seasonal or ritual-based choices of concealing and revealing (Weinberger 2015). Importantly, servicescapes offer opportunities for consumers to conceal and reveal their stigmatized identities as they interact with the service environment, service providers, and other patrons. In this dissertation, I fill an important gap in the marketing literature. Specifically, I ask: How do consumers with a concealable stigma participate in servicescapes? How do they balance their consumption-related needs with needs associated with their well-being?

INCLUSION AND SERVICESCAPES

Servicescapes range in their level of complexity: some are more elaborate such as a golf course while others are leaner such as a banking kiosk (Bitner 1992). Servicescapes also vary in who primarily performs actions within them: some are customer-only or self-

service such as a movie theater, some are employee-only or remote service such as an insurance company, and others are customer and employee or interpersonal services such as restaurants (Bitner 1992). Virtual environments also are servicescapes when services take place on their sites, such as online shopping or dating sites (Beudaert, Gorge, and Herbert 2017). Furthermore, depending on the type of servicescape, firms must make decisions about the built environment regarding what is best for the consumer, the employee, or both. The results are complex decisions based on human psychological and physiological processes akin to product packaging decisions but for services (Bitner 1992).

Servicescapes are important to study for many reasons. They often set the tone for the entire service experience, significantly influencing consumer perception and satisfaction. They also represent the firm in the marketplace (Bitner 1992). Since many elements of services are difficult to assess or may be intangible, the tangible aspects of servicescapes are important to consider as they also impact consumer experiences and evaluations of the service (Bitner 1992; Zeithaml 1988). The overall design and physicality of the servicescape can impact the degree of success of consumers in meeting their goals once in the servicescape (Baker et al. 2007; Bitner 1992). As a result, consumers may approach or avoid the servicescape in future consumption episodes as a result of previous consumer experiences in the servicescape (Bitner 1992; Rosenbaum 2005).

Previous work has often considered the impact of servicescape decisions on consumer spending (Brüggen et al. 2011; Dagger and Danaher 2014). Other research has focused on the impact of servicescape aesthetics on consumer choice (Dion and Borraz 2017), consumer perceptions of service providers (Pounders, Babin, and Close 2015), and

overall perceptions of the servicescape (Thompson and Arsel 2004). Servicescape research has also looked at how managers can engage the consumer's five senses to create a comfortable, enjoyable, and soothing experience (Krishna 2011). This work considers factors such as volume of music (Biswas, Lund, and Szocs 2019) and color (Lee, Noble, and Biswas 2018) on consumer behavior such as consumer spending (Krishna 2011). Indeed, much of the research on servicescapes focuses on the manager's ability to make decisions related to the servicescape that optimize consumer spending in one way or another.

Complementary research has explored how consumers utilize servicescapes to feel a sense of agency and control (Kozinets et al. 2004; Seregina and Weijo 2017), and how consumers become attached to servicescapes, seeing it as more than a place where one goes for shopping (Bradford and Sherry 2015; Debenedetti, et al. 2013; Visconti et al. 2010). In fact, the idea that servicescapes make up a "third place" to which consumers become attached, beyond their home and work, is one that has been explored in the marketing literature. Thompson and Arsel (2004) state, "[t]hird-places are conducive to informal conversations and casual friendships, where patrons imbibe a comforting sense of community, camaraderie, and social engagement" (p. 633). Debenedetti et al. (2013) extend research on third places by proposing a theoretical framework by which people develop attachment to a servicescape, answering the question of how third places come to exist. Rosenbaum, Ward, Walker, and Ostrom (2007) seek to answer why third places exist in their study and find that they provide a space for people who lack social connections in other aspects of their life. The literature on third places, thus, highlights

that servicescapes fulfill social and commercial needs for both consumers and service providers.

Nonetheless, much of the current work on servicescapes captures how managers can better craft environments that are suitable to the "typical" consumer, or one that is generally free from discrimination, vulnerability, and stigma. Yet consumers who are stigmatized or vulnerable in some way are likely to have qualitatively different experiences of servicescapes than the "typical" or non-stigmatized consumers (Baker 2006; Baker et al. 2007; Lee, Ozanne, and Hill 1999). These consumers may not feel comfortable being their whole self in a servicescape, as they need to manage which aspects of themselves they reveal in everyday situations. To this point, Henderson and Rank-Christman (2016) assert that marketers have failed to fully realize their goals of reaching diverse consumers because they market to them based on preconceptions of their identities, and not to their whole self.

In fact, the experiences of stigmatized consumers in servicescapes has received scant attention, with most work focusing on consumers with disabilities that are readily apparent, such those who are have a visual impairment (Baker 2006) or a physical disability (Baker et al. 2007). One exception is the work of Beudaert et al. (2017), who consider how consumers with "hidden" auditory disabilities cope with this condition in servicescapes. These consumers, who have one type of concealable stigma, report feeling as though service workers viewed them as "freaks," "liars," and felt a lack of legitimacy especially when they attempted to cope in the servicescape by, for example, putting on earmuffs. Indeed, when their stigma becomes visible, they face discrimination. Similarly, Adkins and Ozanne (2005) find that consumers with low literacy skills enact coping

strategies to meet their consumption needs without alerting unknown others to their low literacy skills. Augmenting the research on physical disability, Rosenbaum (2005) explores how gay, lesbian, and Jewish people approach or avoid servicescapes based on perceptions of whether they will be welcome there. In fact, inclusion or "welcome" is a cornerstone in the study of servicescapes among stigmatized consumers (Baker et al. 2007; Fisk et al. 2018; Rosenbaum 2005) as well as the Transformative Services Research (TSR) approach, which aims to improve individual and social well-being through service research (Anderson et al. 2013; Fiske et al. 2018; Rosenbaum et al. 2011).

Recently, several scholars have noted the need for services research to explore the importance of inclusive design (Anderson et al. 2013; Fisk et al. 2018; Ostrom et al. 2015). In their agenda for "design for service inclusive," Fisk and colleagues (2018) note an important component missing from the current literature on stigma and servicescapes, as well as from a TSR approach: the role of servicescapes in alleviating suffering, not just improving well-being. Given the nature and significance of services, they are poised to have a significant impact on consumer well-being. Designing one's servicescape to be inclusive can help firms keep up with global trends (Fisk et al. 2018). In addition to the psychological benefit of belonging (Baumeister and Leary 1995), servicescapes can provide restorative benefits to consumers (Rosenbaum 2009) such as providing places of relief and refuge. Additionally, recent work has found evidence that stigmatized consumers look for signals of safety and threat to determine if a business will be a safe place for them (Chaney, Sanchez, and Maimon 2019). Servicescapes can structure safer experiences for consumers with stigmatized identities and enable these consumers to get

their consumption needs met without sacrificing their well-being. In this way, servicescapes can play a role in alleviating, reducing, and eradicating stigma by providing safer market spaces.

"Safe space" has become a popular culture term for any space free of conflict (Merriam-Webster 2019). More specifically, a safe space is any space where members of marginalized groups can come together as a community, be themselves without fear of harm, and connect over their shared experiences (Osman 2016). Interestingly, it is a term that has not yet been investigated in the context of consumption. Indeed, the currently accepted term is "safer space." Potter (2019), a pioneer and activist in this space, asserts that "safer" is more appropriate to use than "safe" because there is no space that is safe for everyone. However, those who provide safer spaces acknowledge "that some people are discriminated against just for being who they are" (p. 11) and take it upon themselves to protect and support them. Best practices regarding safer spaces are continuing to take shape and change. It is a prime time to have this conversation in the marketing literature.

Based on the current literature on servicescapes, recent and unanswered calls in the TSR literature for research on inclusive servicescapes, and the relevant and dynamic nature of the safer spaces discourse, I propose a second set of research questions. In particular, I ask:

How and why do service providers create and maintain inclusive servicescapes? How do service providers handle challenges to their inclusive servicescape?

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

SUITABILITY OF CONTEXT

The first objective of this dissertation is to theorize the servicescapes experiences of consumers with a stigma that is highly concealable. To do so, I sampled from on one such group of consumers, namely bisexuals. The term bisexual or "bi+" (pronounced "bi plus") refers to the potential to be attracted, romantically and/or sexually, to people of more than one sex and/or gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree (Burchard 2006; Ochs 2013). The term bi+ acts as an umbrella term for the many labels that individuals take on to express an attraction to more than one gender (see Table 1 in Appendix for glossary). These labels include bisexual, pansexual, and queer, among others, while some individuals may choose no label at all.

Much like other minority groups, bi+ identities have limited media representation (Burchard 2006). In addition, bi+ identities are made less visible due to how their expression can be easily misinterpreted in social interactions. When an individual is seen with a partner whose gender resembles theirs, they are assumed to be gay or lesbian. However, when their partner is perceived to be of a different gender, they are assumed to be straight. Bi+ individuals may have partners of different genders at the same or different points in time, yet they are either assumed to be straight or gay/lesbian. Thus, the typical way of deciphering a person's sexual identity (whether accurate or not) erases bi+ identities, further reinforcing concealment of these identities. One's bi+ identity is usually invisible unless one explicitly chooses to reveal it, as when one wears a pin or shirt with bi+ pride colors.

Bi+ individuals make up the "B" in the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus) community. With a purchasing power nearing $1 trillion, the LGBTQ+ community has often been labeled a "Dream Market" segment for marketers in the U.S. (Green 2016; Peñaloza 1996; Read, van Driel, and Potter 2018). Within academia, studies on this community typically focus on affluent gay and lesbian consumers. Yet, bi+ individuals make up the largest group of this segment: about 52% (Gates 2011). And this consumer group seems to be growing. According to one study, almost 33% of Americans under the age of thirty self-identify as something other than "exclusively heterosexual" or "exclusively homosexual" (Moore 2015). Due to the concealable nature of their identity, bi+ consumers often suffer from feelings of isolation and devaluation (MAP 2016). As a result, bi+ consumers face extremely poor outcomes related to physical and mental health, income, and even refugee status (Table 2).

In short, given its conceptual fit with the definition of concealable stigma and its economic importance, bi+ consumers provide an interesting theoretical opportunity to deepen our understanding of stigma in the marketplace, as well as a practical opportunity to investigate how managers can provide diverse consumers with safer servicescapes in which to consume.

DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

To capture a holistic picture of the focal phenomenon, I employed ethnographic methods (Fetterman 2019). This ethnographic study involved different data sources and multiple methods (Belk, Fischer, and Kozinets 2013; Ger and Sandikci 2006; McCracken 1988). Long interviews (McCracken 1988) enabled me to gain an understanding of the

individual experiences of consumers with a concealable stigma as well as service providers' thoughts on creating inclusive servicescapes. In turn, participant observation in a group of bi+ individuals allowed me to access the sociocultural aspects of the experiences of consumers with a concealable stigma. These methods and sources helped me gain an understanding of the "why" behind consumer experiences and managerial decisions (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994).

Participant Observation

I conducted participant observation of a bi+ social group located in a mid-sized Midwestern city. The purpose of the bi+ social group is to provide a warm environment for bi+ people to come together without the fear of being sexualized. Most of the members of the bi+ social group are in their mid-20s to early-30s and either work full time or are students at a local university. The group holds monthly two-hour meetings at various public and private locations, including coffee shops, public libraries, and community organizing spaces. As a bi+ person myself, I was largely considered part of the local bi+ community when beginning this ethnographic study.

Initially, I approached the two co-founding members of the group about the possibility of taking part in a research opportunity. Receiving endorsement from the co-founders of the group enabled me to begin my work as a researcher and benefit from some of the trust that current group members extended to these two co-founders (Fetterman 2019). Following IRB approval, I was invited to speak at the next meeting to share a general overview of the objectives of the current study and the role of the group in facilitating meeting these objectives. Members of the bi+ social group were invited to

ask any questions they had. Following this, the members of the bi+ group gave consent for the study. I began taking formal fieldnotes at the next meeting.

In a typical meeting, members of the group arrive and make nametags with their preferred name and pronouns, followed by introductions and announcements of upcoming events that may be of interest to bi+ people. Next comes time for general discussion, when they share what they have termed "bisexual grievances" and "bisexual celebrations." Bisexual grievances are any complaints or bad experiences a member wants to share about being bi+. These can range from humorous (e.g., complaining that Piper on *Orange is the New Black* is clearly bi+ but does not ever use that label) to serious in nature (e.g., being dismissed by a parent after coming out as bi+ to them). Conversely, bisexual celebrations are happy announcements of life updates about being bi+. For example, a member shared that their brother recently came out as bi+ to them and their parents, adding that "it felt good that he trusted me to confide in me and that I'm not the only one in my family anymore." Playing board games is a large part of the bi+ social group meeting and often takes place following general discussion and runs for the remainder of the meeting. I have observed the bi+ social group at meeting sites and a number of other *ad hoc* occasions, such as Dungeons & Dragons sessions, nights out, public protests, and meet-ups with other local groups created on the basis of sexual identity.

As a participant observer, I took detailed fieldnotes and photos of the physical environment, group dynamics, the discussion, and any other activity of the meetings. Often at these meetings and events, there was the opportunity to ask specific questions of a participant and have them elaborate on some of their doings. These *in situ* interviews

were extremely helpful in increasing my understanding of aspects of the cultural group under study. After approximately two years of fieldwork, I reached theoretical saturation and stopped collecting data from this group.

Consumer Interviews

To complement participant observation, I conducted long interviews (McCracken 1988) with bi+ consumers to further grasp their marketplace experiences (see Appendix for interview guide). This dataset comprises conversations with 21 bi+ individuals (Table 3). I invited members of the bi+ social group for interviews, as well as bi+ individuals from other regions through LGBTQ+ campus centers, LGBTQ+ city organizations, informal networks, and snowball sampling.

Informants' ages ranged from 23 to 48, and interviews lasted between 35 and 160 minutes. Interviews took place at sites chosen by the informants and included informant homes, offices, conference rooms, and coffee shops. Additionally, the majority of interviews took place in person, with only a few taking place over the phone and video to accommodate informants' preferences. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim.

These conversations started with "grand tour" (McCracken 1988) questions to build a bridge between the interviewer and interviewee. These questions focused on informants' background and general interests. Subsequently, I moved on to asking about their experiences as a bi+ person, such as their coming out experiences. This was an important aspect of the interviews because, due to the concealable (and often invisible) nature of bi+ identity, individuals must continue to come out throughout their lifetime. This

process shed light on how bi+ individuals make the decision to come out, and what signals enable or constrain this process. Next, I asked questions about their experiences regarding a variety of servicescapes.

Service Provider Interviews

I conducted interviews with managers and owners of servicescapes that had demonstrated some commitment to creating and maintaining an inclusive space. The sample includes a variety of servicescapes, from bars and coffee shops to gyms and health care facilities. Informants' ages ranged from 32 to 49, and interviews lasted between 23 and 60 minutes (Table 4).

Recruitment of businesses managers and owners took place through snowball sampling and informal networks. Consumer informants, during both participant observation and interviews, identified servicescapes where they did and did not feel comfortable revealing their stigmatized identity. For example, I became aware of a retail establishment who had a safer space sign in their business vandalized. By being connected with the bi+ community, I leveraged my contacts to approach this service provider for an interview. I then asked service provider informants if they could connect me with other business leaders that were committed to the idea of creating an inclusive service environment.

Similar to consumer interviews, interviews with managers began with grand tour questions about their personal and professional background. To create trust, I also made clear that I was interested in learning about, and not evaluating the business for which they work. I then moved onto questions specific to their experience and history with their

current business. Next, I asked questions regarding their decision to be an inclusive space. I probed further to get at the nature of not only the decision-making process but also how this action or commitment towards a safer space has changed over time. I ended the interview by asking about future plans regarding their inclusive space work. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Ethical Considerations

I followed standard procedures set forth for research on human subjects. First, I received approval from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Institutional Review Board (IRB#) for this study. Second, I had informants sign informed consent forms for both interviews and participant observation (Exhibit 2 in Appendix) (Creswell and Poth 2018). When informants signed the informed consent form, I went over the information in the form and answered any questions they had about the study. For participant observation, I received approval from the consumer social group I collected data on and held a question and answer session at their meeting where I discussed my research purpose, informed consent, and explained the IRB approval. Third, as per IRB requirements, I am keeping the informed consent forms for a period of 5 years in a locked cabinet at which point I will destroy them.

In addition to standard procedures, I adopted specific practices to account for the particularities of my sample. In recruiting consumers for this study, I refrained from using specific labels such as "bisexual" or "bi+." There are numerous labels that individuals who experience attraction to more than one gender choose to use, and some use no label at all. Therefore, I used the language of attraction as a criterion for the study

and allowed informants to self-identify what label they prefer, if one at all. In my interviews with bi+ consumers, I asked them to choose their own pseudonym and pronoun (Reinharz 1992) and tried to be mindful of the sensitive nature of this research (Ger and Sandikci 2006). I was flexible in my questions when I realized that informants wanted to avoid discussing sensitive topics. Regarding service providers, I have also anonymized the name of local businesses (Cotte and Kistruck 2006); however, when informants refer to large corporations in their answers, I use the original name to keep the contextuality of the data. In reporting the findings (Chapter 4), I use the pronouns "they/them" to refer to any informant who has a gender identity of non-binary, genderqueer, or queer, unless otherwise specified by the informant.

ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

The analysis of all streams of data collection involved several steps and began with writing analytical memos after each interview and fieldwork event. In these memos, I documented my initial observations and perceptions. These memos then became part of the overall data set and I coded them just as I did the transcripts and field notes. I discuss the open coding approach I took next.

Throughout the analysis process, I sought to gradually move from the descriptive to the abstract. I followed Saldaña's (2016) codes-to-theory model in which I moved from the data to codes to categories to themes or concepts, and finally to assertions and findings. I did not impose an existing theory on the data. This form of open coding is consistent with the ethnographic method in which "the ethnographer enters the field with an open mind, not an empty head" (Fetterman 2019, p. 1). As I coded, I sought to identify

patterns within the data which served as a form of ethnographic reliability (Fetterman 2019). Here, I utilized triangulation, a form of ethnographic validity that required me, the researcher, to identify instances where multiple sources were reinforcing the same pattern or theme (Fetterman 2019). In terms of internal validity, I discussed the data and findings with my dissertation chairs on a regular basis. Additionally, I spent two years conducting participant observation. This type of deep immersion in the field allowed me to form relationships with informants, further reinforcing the quality of data collected.

I relied on the constant comparison method as I analyzed the data. This required me to compare segments of texts such as an interview transcript to other segments of the same and other texts, as well as comparing whole texts to one another (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This enabled me to view periods of fieldwork as well as interviews from a more holistic perspective as well as zoom in on specific experiences or passages. Additionally, I followed an iterative model of analysis (Spiggle 1994). I moved between the literature on stigma, consumption, and servicescapes as well as the data in order to facilitate analysis and interpretation of the phenomenon of concealable stigma (Spiggle 1994). Current literature informed my analysis, yet analysis also informed my search of relevant literature.

POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

As a researcher, I occupy a unique position as both insider and outsider in the current study. As an outsider, I am a researcher entering the field to conduct this study. As an insider, I am a bi+ person and member of the bi+ social group included in this study. I found that identifying as bi+, enabled me to build trust among informants. Given the long

history of discrimination of bi+ people by both straight and LGBTQ+ communities, I found my bi+ identity to be advantageous to encouraging informants to open up about their experiences. As a researcher, I identify as a social constructivist (Charmaz 2014), and believe that identity is often dynamic, changing, and socially constructed. I also believe that the interaction between myself and the participants co-creates the data that is produced (Charmaz 2014). Indeed, had a straight or gay/lesbian researcher conducted this study, the data may lack depth or take on a different "truth."

As a bi+ individual, my participation in this study as a researcher was an incredibly powerful experience for me. I witnessed firsthand the strength and compassion of the bi+ community. At times I experienced great internal tension, given that the purpose of the bi+ social group is to foster a sense of community. As a participant observer I tried to balance my participation with the need to observe the group's organic interactions. I had the pleasure of sharing the bi+ social group with other bi+ individuals I met during the course of individual long interviews. Given the history of discrimination of bi+ people, I often found that informants I recruited from avenues other than the bi+ social group had no idea how many bi+ people exist in the world, or in their local community. I am proud that this work played a role in bringing bi+ people together to celebrate their shared identity.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

I organize this chapter into two broad sections: one that highlights consumer experiences, the other that brings to the fore service provider perspectives. The consumer-centric section answers the question of how consumers with a concealable stigmatized identity participate in servicescapes and balance their consumption-related need with their overall well-being. In turn, the section centered on service providers focuses on the questions of how and why these market actors create and maintain inclusive servicescapes.

CONSUMERS' CONCEALABLE STIGMATIZED IDENTITY IN SERVICESCAPES

Bi+ consumers experience stigma in many kinds of market spaces. As such, these consumers often decide to hide their concealable stigmatized identities in these sites, doing so through practices that I conceptualize as 1) partially withdrawing and 2) camouflaging. However, these consumers also frequently make a point to reveal their concealable stigmatized identity, doing so both individually and collectively. Individually, they reveal their concealable stigmatized identity through practices that I conceptualize as 1) narrowcasting, 2) broadcasting, and 3) downplaying. Collectively, they do so through practices that I conceptualize as 1) co-creating safer spaces and 2) mapping spaces of refuge (Table 5). Each of these practices is associated with tradeoffs that I specify in the following analysis. To contextualize these tradeoffs, I begin with an overview of how bi+ consumers experience stigma in their lives, and specifically in market spaces.

An Overview of Bi+ Stigma

The stigma experienced by bi+ consumers tends to be based on negative stereotypes (Goffman 1963). In this sense, bi+ consumers experience stigma in ways that are similar to those with unconcealable stigmatized identities. However, unlike those with unconcealable stigmatized identities, bi+ consumers may "feel out" how others may react to their own identity before actually revealing it. For example, upon telling her mother that one of her friends was bi+, Valerie (29, non-binary, educator) received a talk about the problems with bi+ people:

> When my mom found out that my high school friend was bi, she just reacted very, very negatively. And so I kind of just dropped the subject entirely. And I remember she and my dad both gave me a lecture at one point—but I don't even know if they remember it—about how bi people were dangerous and that they were home wreckers and cheaters, and that I should not be friends with them, lest people think I was like that.

Valerie's recollection highlights some of the prevalent stereotypes that bi+ people face, including those of being promiscuous and unreliable. Moreover, this offers insight into the concealability of a bi+ identity. Valerie was able to hide, or at least suppress, her sexual identity even from intimate others, in this case her parents, for over a decade. It is this concealability that allows bi+ individuals to be undetected by others and thus avoid negative experiences. But it is also this concealability that leads their sexual identity and their individualities to be often treated as invisible in the various spaces that constitute their daily lives. This dual quality of bi+ identities significantly shapes these consumers' experiences in servicescapes.

In the original servicescape model, Bitner (1992) proposes that consumers form perceptions of servicescapes through ambient conditions (e.g., music), layout elements (e.g., furnishings), and visual cues (e.g., signage). Bi+ consumers refer holistically to all these components as the "vibe" of the servicescape. For these consumers, this vibe is also informed by their direct interactions with service providers. For example, consider Eleanor's (31, woman, general manager) story when she was booking a bed and breakfast for her and her girlfriend:

> I stayed at a Bed and Breakfast in (Southern city) [that] was owned by one woman, and I remember on the phone when I was making a reservation for me and my girlfriend. She mentioned that, on Sunday mornings, we have to get breakfast by a certain time or something because she goes to church. When she mentioned that I didn't think anything of it, but my girlfriend asked, "Should we check-in separately?" Not just because she goes to church so she would be uncomfortable with us sharing a bed, but it was definitely on our minds. Like we did not hold hands walking in there, we were very much just friends. So, I know the feeling. I mean that doesn't stop me from doing much here in America, but other places, traveling abroad, I would definitely probably get two beds.

Like many other bi+ consumers, Eleanor ponders aspects of the servicescape that might be irrelevant for other consumers making lodging decisions. She makes inferences about the broader cultural environment of the hotel (located in a city embedded in the highly conservative Southern U.S.) and the service provider's religiosity to assess how the impact that their sexual identity may have on her consumer experience. These

elements create an extra layer of complexity for bi+ consumers to make purchase decisions and behave in ways that are authentic to their selves but will also keep them from being stigmatized.

In contrast to Eleanor's story where she and her girlfriend concealed their identity for a one-time service experience, bi+ consumers also conceal in servicescapes that they visit every day. Minerva (28, woman, doctoral candidate), for example, spent the first few years at her gym concealing her identity, despite her desire to reveal it. Like many gyms, Minerva's is membership based. Unlike many gyms, Minerva's is small and constitutes a very tight-knit community where members often develop relationships that extend beyond the gym. Minerva decided she wanted to reveal fairly early in her membership at the gym, but she put off doing so for several years because of signals in the servicescape sent by service providers and patrons:

> I knew there was a group of people (members) who aren't there anymore who were like super hardcore Republican. I also knew the gym owners were pretty religious (Christians), and I just never know what flavor of Christianity I'm gonna get—I think those people were like, "I'm Christian and accepting," and that's fine. But there are also people who are like, "I don't hate gay people; I just don't think they should have any rights." And I didn't know who I was gonna run into.

Minerva pays close attention to cues provided by other patrons and service providers. Further, she takes cues from the servicescapes' décor. Above the main office, located at the entry of this servicescape, is a visible bible quote that reads, "The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord" (Proverbs 21:31). At one point, the

gym also had branded apparel featuring this quote. These signals told Minerva about the religious views of the owners, service providers, and possibly other patrons. Minerva reflects on this period of time when she concealed her identity, but wanted to be able to reveal it:

> It's just uncomfortable, but it also gets to a point where you…I'm not very fearful, but I understand that it could be very fearful and stressful for other people. I didn't wanna be made uncomfortable, like I didn't belong, or have whispers and all that kind of stuff.

Despite these experiences, the thought never crossed Minerva's mind to discontinue going to the gym. She says, "I'm used to those kinds of comments all the time, like it's just par for the course. So, it's not something I typically end things for…but that comes from years of building up that armor where you can brush it off." Minerva shares that she has lived in several regions where she is in the minority due to not only her bi+ identity but also her Black identity. While some bi+ consumers may not return to a servicescape they view as unwelcoming, Minerva views this as part of everyday life and has come up with strategies to deal with it.

Interestingly, bi+ consumers' stigmatizing experiences may be even more dramatic when servicescapes advertise themselves as "safe spaces." One example of this type of servicescape is gay bars, which have long been considered havens for members of the LGBTQ+ community to come together and express themselves without fear of retaliation (D'Addario 2016). Despite this history, bi+ consumers often report facing stigma in these servicescapes, with experiences that range from other market actors telling them that bi+

identity is not "real" all the way to physical and sexual assaults. Lily (25, woman, customer service representative) chronicles a negative experience in a gay bar:

> One time, an MC there was like, "Who here is gay?" And everybody was like "Woo." [and he was like] "Who here, who here's a lesbian?" "Woo!" And you know, it went on to like trans people and all that. And then finally they were like, "Who here is bi?" And I was like, "Woo!" And me and one other dude were the only ones that wooed (laughs)… And then he was like, "Pick a side." and I was like, "[are you] fucking kidding me?" This is where I'm supposed to feel welcome, and I can't feel welcome there. It's a joke. And I complained about that specific instance to gay guys, and they're like, "Oh, that's just a joke; you need to lighten up." Which no! If some straight person told you that or something similar, like some similar gay slur, you'd be pissed!

Bi+ consumers' assumption that gay bars are safe spaces for expressing their identities appears to increase their vulnerability, since this assumption leads them to put less effort in evaluating the potential side effects of revealing their stigmatized identity. Sometimes, this vulnerability is physically felt. Sam (30, non-binary, artist) discloses a time they were battered by another customer in a gay bar:

> I was out at [local bar], which was a gay bar that used to exist here in [city], and I used to frequent there all the time. And I went there for like a college night or something, and there was this guy playing pool, and we ended up playing pool together. And he claimed that he was queer. But then he started groping me. Like, he grabbed my boobs, was like touching

> me in inappropriate places, thinking that it was okay, and I told him it was not okay. And we ended up getting in this like…he got mad at me, and… he threw me on the ground and broke my collarbone… That's the type of thing that scares me... He claimed he was queer, yet he still felt like he could violate me in a space that you feel safe.

While bi+ consumers can simply avoid going to gay bars not to experience harm, this decision cuts them off from being a part of the LGBTQ+ community, which defeats one of the intended purposes of gay bars. As such, bi+ consumers need to weigh the benefits of feeling safe against the costs of limited socialization and participation in the marketplace. In fact, research suggests that when bi+ consumers feel stigmatized by others they view as their in-group, in this case the LGBTQ+ community, this stigma affects them at a much deeper level (Flanders, Robinson, and Logie 2015). For example, previous research has found that bi+ people report worse mental health outcomes compared to their straight and gay/lesbian counterparts, such as higher levels of anxiety, depression, and negative affect (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. 2010).

In sum, bi+ consumers face stigma in various servicescapes. In response, they constantly monitor a wide range of aspects of these spaces, including service providers and other patrons, to feel out how others would receive their sexual identity. Importantly, bi+ consumers cannot even assume that servicescapes advertised as "safe spaces" are indeed safe for them. The next sections conceptualize the practices and tradeoffs involved when bi+ consumers decide to conceal or reveal their sexual identity in servicescapes.

Practices of Concealing

Given their frequent experiences with stigma, bi+ consumers often make deliberate decisions to conceal their identities from other market actors in servicescapes. They do so in two major ways: 1) partially withdrawing and 2) camouflaging. Each form of concealing is discussed next.

Partially Withdrawing. Withdrawing from servicescapes is a way of avoiding altogether direct experiences of stigma in the marketplace. But of course, bi+ consumers cannot simply escape all sorts of servicescapes and still have their needs met. Instead, they become highly selective of the servicescapes they visit, often cultivating a domesticized lifestyle. When asked what types of establishments she frequents, Anna (40, woman, delivery rider) says:

> I (laughs) don't like going to anywhere new or different. If it's not a place [or] people I'm familiar with then [I won't go]—I'm always alone. But if [it's] neither, then [it's] much more difficult [to go].

The amount of time spent at home emerged as a clear pattern in the interviews with informants. Many spontaneously shared their preference for doing hobbies and meeting with friends at home as a way of feeling safe. For example, Trevor (38, man, graduate teaching assistant) says, "I tend to be very homebound, not homebound, but like, I just stay in a lot." On this point, Grace (27, woman, software engineer) says, "I don't go out a lot." This domesticized lifestyle is often accompanied with a predisposition to shop online, as with Kelsey (27, mostly woman, graduate student), "I almost never buy in person. I'll go on Amazon or direct from (the brand)." Likewise, Amber (30, non-binary, educator) shares their avoidance of any kind of shopping, "I don't really like shopping

much. If I buy anything, probably Goodwill." Amber shops at Goodwill because they believe the staff do not care about what types of clothes they buy, and they prefer to dress more masculine.

In their study of low-literate consumers, Adkins and Ozanne (2005) find that many informants withdraw from the marketplace. To have their needs met, they often outsource consumption activities, as when they have others do grocery shopping for them. In this way, bi+ consumers and low-literate consumers behave similarly. However, bi+ consumers find other outlets to meet their consumption needs such as thrift stores and e-retailers, as opposed to outsourcing these needs to close others. Additionally, bi+ consumers like Anna (40, woman, delivery rider) note their willingness to engage with market spaces if they are sure others who they know will support them will be present in that space. In this way, bi+ consumers partially withdraw as individuals from market spaces but engage as collectives.

Bi+ consumers also withdraw from servicescapes that may have direct implications on their physical well-being, as when they avoid healthcare providers. The decision to partially withdraw from this area of the marketplace tends to be grounded in a specific stigmatizing experience, as when Quinn (25, genderqueer, educator) shared their sexual identity with their primary care provider when they were in their early teen years:

> My primary (care provider), when I was a teenager asked if I was having sex, 'cause I was a teenager and he wanted to know. And I was already on birth control because when I was really young I had an ovarian cyst that ruptured. So when I was about 15 he asked if I was having sex, and I was like well I'm not having sex with boys. He remained my primary care

> physician but he was never willing to talk about anything to do with sexual health after that—And if I was having an issue with it, then I just had to deal with it.

Like Quinn, many other participants had similar experiences that lead them to neglect important areas of their healthcare. Quinn goes on to say that, "In general in my life, I have avoided [going to the doctor] unless it's absolutely necessary because I just don't want to deal with the conversation about my sexual identity]. [The interaction] is just something I choose not to deal with, because [the doctor] is someone I only see when I need to, and it's just easier to not make a big deal of [my sexual identity]." Similarly, Lily (25, woman, customer service representative) says, "I don't go to the doctor as often as I should…I go to the doctor less than like once every 5 years; so I'm not super great about it." Likewise, Amber (30, non-binary, educator) refrained from going to the doctor for over a decade and still has not shared their bi+ sexual identity with their current provider.

Withdrawal from certain servicescapes may effectively limit stigmatizing experiences, but this practice is associated with negative implications for these consumers' well-being in the long-term, as symptoms and overall health compounds over time. Ward and colleagues (2014) report that fewer bi+ people have a usual place to go to for medical care and more bi+ people were unable to get needed medical care in the past year as compared to straight people. Given that bi+ people are more likely to suffer from illnesses such as diabetes (Beach, Elasy, and Gonzales 2018), obesity (Ward et al. 2014), and addiction (Ward et al. 2014), they are at greater risk for issues related to declining health (see Table 2). Moreover, when bi+ consumers do see a doctor, one may must

wonder about the accuracy of care they receive given these consumers' propensity to omit their sexual identity in response to their perceived risk of being stigmatized again.

Bi+ consumers consider a range of information when making the decision to avoid a servicescape. For example, Kay (26, non-binary, nurse) and Quinn (25, genderqueer, educator) use corporate policies to infer if they will be safe in certain servicescapes. Kay states that they "vote with their wallet" by not spending their money in places like Chick fil-A and Hobby Lobby, two companies with openly conservative policies toward customers and employees, such as being closed on Sundays for religious purposes:

> When I stop using a business, it usually has less to do with my personal experiences there, and more to do with it coming to my awareness of their like negative policies…So nobody's ever talked shit to me at Chick-fil-A…but, I've never walked in there wearing, a "hello I'm bisexual shirt" either, because I don't fucking go to Chick-fil-A…. Hobby Lobby, like it's low key obnoxious walking in there, but I don't hold all of the products with random Bible verses all over them against them, nearly as much as I hold them being responsible for my employer being able to deny me birth control coverage, which they have done.

Bi+ consumers make tradeoffs regarding which spaces they can and want to exist, and which spaces are unsafe or not worth their energy to exist. Indeed, the concealment practice of partially withdrawing comes with its own tradeoffs. Avoiding certain servicescapes, such as healthcare spaces, may further exacerbate negative health outcomes as it keeps bi+ consumers from receiving timely support, diagnoses, and treatment. This avoidance may also impact bi+ consumers' mental well-being, as when

they stop visiting bars and other places where people often socialize. Thus, bi+ consumers must constantly make trade-offs when it comes to their well-being when engaging with servicescapes. By avoiding servicescapes, bi+ consumers take part in withdrawing, yet, bi+ consumers exhibit camouflaging behaviors once they approach and enter servicescapes, as discussed next.

Camouflaging. To avoid stigma, bi+ consumers often make the decision to blend into the servicescape. Camouflaging allows bi+ individuals to move through servicescapes and get their needs met without being detected or identified. Sadie (26, woman, sales manager) who is very open with her bi+ identity, must travel through a small rural town for work and often takes her lunch break there. She phrases the choice to blend in as "there are things that…are better left unsaid." She elaborates:

> When I'm in that city on Thursdays, I don't bring it up. Like, and not that, I mean, and if someone were to ask, well are you [bisexual?], I'd be like, well yeah, you know, but it's not really— 'Cause I mean, I'm the only one that looks like I do in that town when I'm in there.

Sadie is quite cognizant of how much she stands out by virtue of her appearance. As she puts it, "I have like all the piercings and the haircut, and the tattoos, and you know, just people identify that kind a craziness (Laughs) with being queer of some sort." When traveling through this small rural town on her route, Sadie takes pains to blend into her surroundings and avoid stigma. For example, most of Sadie's tattoos are in locations on her body that are easily concealed by her modest work uniform of black pants and a black company polo shirt. She typically wears her hair pulled back in a simple bun. Though she

is a boisterous individual, happy to talk about all aspects of her identity in social situations, when she is on her route she keeps the conversation to her customer's orders and opportunities to cross- or up-sell. Similarly, Sam (30, non-binary, artist) says that they "tone it down" when referring to being bi+ in a service environment that might not be totally safe.

> So, to me it's like going out in public does give me some anxiety, 'cause I feel like… There will be certain places that I will go, that I will tone it down. I will be more conscious of my intimate behavior with my partner because I'm nervous that there is a greater likelihood somebody is gonna be uncomfortable by it, and they might say something. Like if I'm going to like a sports bar, you know, or if we're like on the road and we stop in a little podunk town or something… I'm not going to kiss you or hold your hand right now. Because, to me it's not… in some ways it's just not worth what it could (cause). Like to me it's not hurting me to not hold my partner's hand at that moment, you know. Yeah, it's limiting my expression of myself, but I'm also like, do I really need to hold your hand right now? So like I always have kind of this… like… certain places I don't express that this is my partner.

Sam makes a tradeoff when concealing their identity in certain servicescapes. On the one hand, Sam conceals their true sexual identity and thus helps perpetuate its invisibility and low cultural status. On the other hand, Sam and their partner are able to travel through what they perceive as unsafe or unknown servicescapes relatively unscathed.

Beyond cases of active suppression of identity markers, camouflage also involves more passive responses. For example, Minerva (28, woman, doctoral candidate) shares the frustrating experience of being mistaken for a straight woman that she constantly faces at restaurants. This manifests in how the server split the bill between multiple patrons:

> We'll [my girlfriend and I] go somewhere and they'll just assume we're separate. It was funny, like we went out, it was me and [my girlfriend], and then her brother and sister-in-law, for her brother's birthday. And they put them together and they split our checks automatically. Or like we went out to eat on like a date night, and they like split our checks automatically. And I went out with my friends from the gym, and it was two couples, and then like me and Dave who I am not dating, and we are good, like best friends, but like are not dating. And they're like "So you two are together?" And I was like, "How come I go out with my fuckin' girlfriend and like, no one assumes we are [together], and I hang out with Dave, and like we always get mistaken for a couple?"

Despite feeling angry, many bi+ consumers decide, like Minerva, to pass as someone who has a less stigmatized or mainstream sexual identity. For example, Dilbert (25, man, line service technician) is a regular customer in a bar frequented mostly by gay male patrons. On one occasion, one of these patrons assumed that Dilbert was gay rather than bi+. Dilbert decided to go along with this assumption: "I was just like—I didn't like—explain it to him. I didn't tell him that I was bisexual." When asked about his reasoning

for passing as gay in the situation, Dilbert shares, “It’s just like, ‘cause some people that are like, ‘Oh you’re bi. That’s not a real thing.’ or something like that.”

In sum, camouflaging is an important concealing practice for bi+ consumers, as it enables them to protect themselves and their loved ones while participating in a range of servicescapes. Sometimes, camouflaging is planned; other times, it is an emergent response adopted to navigate unscathed a particular situation, even though this perpetuates the subordinate cultural status of one’s identity. In addition, camouflaging enables bi+ consumers to get a read on their environment. This step usually precedes their decision to reveal their concealed stigmatized identity in servicescapes.

Practices of Revealing

Bi+ consumers must decide whether and how to reveal their identity in a variety of servicescapes. Bi+ consumers may reveal their identity individually or collectively. Individually, bi+ consumers reveal their stigmatized identity through three practices: narrowcasting, broadcasting, and downplaying.

Narrowcasting. This practice refers to the revealing of one’s stigmatized identity to a relatively small audience, sometimes just one person (Barasch and Berger 2014). Often, bi+ consumers control the size of the audience by selecting the kind of signals they send out. For example, Valerie (29, non-binary, educator) reveals their bi+ identity subtly, by wearing items with bi+ pride colors that only few people can decode. Bi+ pride colors are pink, purple, and blue, not the widely circulated pride rainbow that generally alludes to

LGBTQ+ identities. When asked about where they wear these subtle identity markers, Valerie explains:

> I just sort of wear them wherever—I guess—because none of this stuff is like in your face (it doesn't) say "PRIDE" in big letters, and because I'm bi, and so I feel like a lot of the time—like the bi pride colors—I feel like are less well-known to people, so that if I'm wearing them and people are homophobic, they might not even know that it's a bi pride related thing. Whereas people in the know will be like, "Aha! I knew!"

Because bi+ pride signals are not widely known, Valerie needs to be less careful about where they wear them. They can thus display these signals in various spaces, including mainstream servicescapes. However, by revealing their sexual identities through narrowcasting, bi+ consumers like Valerie make themselves vulnerable to possible stigma. They try to reduce the likelihood of being stigmatized by reading the cues on the servicescape and by limiting their revealing to a small number of people. Quinn (25, genderqueer, educator) uses a similar approach to reveal their identity during a regular event promoted by a local brewery, Galactic Cluster Brewery or GCB. Quinn shares:

> Their craft nights are really fun. I also really like getting to meet new people there. And almost every time I've went I've met a new person in the [LGBTQ+] community, which is really fun. Normally when I do a craft, I do a gay craft, even if it's not [supposed to be] a gay craft.

Quinn has received positive feedback from other patrons as well as providers in the servicescape about the "gay crafts" that they make. When asked what it's like to be a bi+ person in this servicescape, Quinn replies:

> Really easy actually because I usually do a gay version of the craft, and so whoever else is in the [LGBTQ+] community gravitates to the table that I'm at which is nice to meet other people. And the people who work there are always really great about that, and they're always like, "We love what you did with it." And it's never like a weird thing.

GCB promotes itself as an eclectic, family establishment, focused on bringing the local community together. Thus, Quinn is not randomly revealing their concealable stigmatized identity. Quinn uses their experiences and environmental cues to narrowcast their identity in a specific servicescape.

While some bi+ informants practice narrowcasting by focusing on the signals they send out, others control the size of the audience by carefully selecting where they express their sexual identity. This requires the individual to consider the nature of the servicescape they are in and use emergent opportunities to reveal their bi+ identity to people who are likely to be receptive. Kay, for example, has an ongoing contest with an elderly straight couple at their gym over who can wear the best t-shirt. Kay uses this opportunity to wear T-shirts about their bi+ and genderqueer identities. This has enabled Kay to feel more comfortable as a bi+ person at their big box gym. Kay elaborates on their experience:

> I'm a lot less nervous than I used to be about like checking out all the cute girls at the gym. Because like yeah there is that low key fear of being seen

> as a creep because I, I am creeping on people (laughs), like what the fuck. But, um, I was really nervous about like striking up a conversation with a cute girl who works overnight. But… this older couple struck up a conversation with me, and I got sucked into their orbit, and she was already trapped in their orbit. So now we like bonded over that. So I can talk to the cute girl who works at the desk now, because of two nosy older people. So I have appreciated that. And… they had a lot of questions about bisexuality, and they kind of avoid gender questions, which has been interesting. Like they're not comfortable enough to ask. And, it all, it all started over t-shirts. So like I'd wear bi specific t-shirts, but when I wear more gender related T-shirts, there are not questions from the class. So I can talk to—the cute girl at the counter about that stuff, um, and I can make a joke about Planet Fitness being painted in the colors of the non-binary flag, and she'll be like "You're right," which means she knows what the non-binary flag looks like.

Beyond bringing into the servicescape items that reveal one's identity, bi+ consumers also signal their identity through the products they may find there. Kay tells a story that happened at TJ Maxx, where they bought rainbow products that led to an interaction with the cashier:

> So I went there before my birthday party, which was in June, and they had a bunch of rainbow party supplies and I cleared them out, and the clerk asked about it. And I was like, "Well I'm doing my birthday party, but you know why the hell not be mostly queer." So she was pretty supportive

> about it. Like it wasn't an interaction where I was like totally sure what I wanted to emphasize there, or clearly I wanted to explain what all was going on. But it's like—it's my birthday, and I'm gonna gay that shit up. Was basically how it went and yea she seemed to think that was cool. It was nice. Both finding all that rainbow stuff there and the clerk like commenting on it in a friendly way.

Kay narrowcasts their identity to an audience of one: the cashier. However, this seemingly banal experience is memorable because it involved a mainstream servicescape and a complete stranger. Kay has since started to see TJ Maxx as an inclusive servicescape.

Broadcasting. This revealing practice refers to indiscriminately revealing one's concealable stigmatized identity. Bi+ consumers do so by liberally using identifiable identity markers in various (vs. select) servicescapes. This move often serves to make the individual the equivalent of a walking conversation piece, hoping to trigger conversations. Quinn (25, genderqueer, educator) says, "T-shirts are an easy way to express your opinion on something without really having to talk to people." Quinn's T-shirts do not rely only on the relatively obscure Bi+ pride colors; instead, their t-shirts display their preferred pronouns in giant font across the front.

Several informants note the dearth of bi+ items such as t-shirts that allow them to broadcast their identity. In response, some make bi+ pride products that they display themselves or sell for others to visibly express their sexual identity. Quinn says:

> I made [my friend] a shirt specifically for Pride, because he uses she and he pronouns so I made a specialized shirt with both of the pronouns on there and it said "She, He, His, Her." So that way it had all of them on there. So I do specialty things like that for people who can't find t-shirts that want them and that fit their specific identity. Which is nice to be able to do, because it is sometimes hard to find something that fits—even with consumerism hitting the LGBTQ market. There's not always stuff out there for gender identity that fits.

Bi+ individuals often display their store-bought or handmade bi+ items in the bi+ social meetings. In doing so, they create opportunities for other bi+ consumers to learn about how to obtain these products. For example, I observed that many members did not know how to obtain T-shirts, bags, and coffee mugs that display bi+ signals. But by seeing other members with these items, they asked for recommendations on how to order them. In this way, the bi+ social group further enables individual revealing practices by giving its members a space to learn about where to find elements to express their sexual identity more publicly. Members then use these items in the practice of broadcasting and in the earlier explained practice of narrowcasting.

Previous research has considered how consumers reveal their unconventional identities. In a study of non-celebrants of Christmas, Weinberger (2015) identifies how these consumers protect their personal beliefs and ritual practices from celebrants while maintaining social ties with them. However, non-celebrants may only experience the pressure to conceal or reveal during the holiday season. Conversely, the decision to reveal one's identity is a daily exercise for bi+ consumers. Moreover, non-celebrants do

not seem to face harsh discrimination by celebrants. By contrast, bi+ consumers often face discrimination by straight individuals and some members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Downplaying. In this type of revealing, consumers interact with other market actors in servicescapes as if they have already revealed their identity in this space, it is no big deal, and they have been fully accepted. Quinn (25, genderqueer, educator) introduces how this revealing practice works for bi+ consumers:

> I am a very open person, just not like—I don't like to make a big deal out of things. So, by doing it that way, it's kind of me just incorporating it in the conversation. 'Cause you know—you probably wanna know these things, 'cause [with] some people it's important to like—put it out there.

Quinn has identified servicescapes, such as Galactic Cluster Brewery, where they can downplay their bi+ identity and let the chips fall where they may. This is particularly meaningful when we consider that Quinn carefully conceals their identity in most areas of their life, including at work, with extended family, and even at the doctor's office. Through the revealing practice of downplaying, bi+ consumers invite service providers and other patrons to view them as multidimensional individuals, as opposed to being defined only by their bi+ identity. When bi+ people find servicescapes that respond well to this approach of revealing, the result is one of ease and comfort. When asked what their experience has been as a bi+ person at such a servicescape, Kay (26, non-binary, nurse) responds, "It just gets taken in stride." Kay adds that they feel, "comfortable, accepted, like it ain't no thing." Through downplaying, bi+ consumers act as if their

sexual identity was common knowledge and accepted, casually asserting it in servicescapes, even if this often involves acting more confidently than they actually feel about coming out to strangers.

Beyond individual practices of revealing, bi+ consumers reveal their concealable stigmatized identity as a collective.

Co-creating safer spaces. As part of a shoal, or a group that stays together for social reasons, bi+ consumers reveal their identities by marking out and co-creating safer territories in existing servicescapes. These temporary boundaries make up relatively safe spaces for bi+ consumers to consume collectively in public.

This can be seen vividly in the initiative called "bi takeovers." These takeovers involve bi+ consumers visiting a variety of servicescapes over the course of the day so that they have the opportunity to reveal their identities in those spaces under the protection of a group. These initiatives are typically organized within the bi+ group. As described during a planning session for a bi takeover, "the plan is to provide ways for people to be visibly bi in public places – both mainstream and queer – for free or a small cost, and to not have to necessarily be around alcohol for the entire event." For example, the first bi takeover involved members of the bi+ social group having lunch at a Japanese restaurant, visiting several local art galleries, having a drink at a local café, and finally attending a drag show at the local gay bar. Throughout the day, I witnessed Xander (24, basically a man, software developer) wear a large bi+ pride flag on his messenger bag. Once we arrive at the gay bar for the drag show, the group decides to be even more visible, as this field note details:

> Once each member of our group pays the cover fee, we walk up to the bar in the back of the space and linger awkwardly as we get warm. The group discusses available seating. Several linger towards a table nearby but Xander wonders aloud, “where can we sit where we can rub this flag in people’s faces? He then walks up to the group of tables right next to the stage, presumably where the drag show will take place. Again, aloud Xander wonders, “do you think we can sit here?” I say, “I don’t see why not. That one is reserved but these aren’t.” We put our things down at the table and I head to the bathroom as others go to the bar to get drinks and change for the show. I return to the table to see Xander unpinning the bi+ flag from his bag. He says, “we should spread this across the table.” We each lift up our drinks and grab parts of the flag to make a tablecloth. Xander takes a selfie with all of us squeezed into the picture and posts it to our Facebook event. Trevor asks for a copy and Xander says, “I uploaded it to our group, too, so you can just grab it from there.

The flag remained a pseudo-tablecloth for the group for the duration of the drag show. After this initial bi takeover, the group has held several others ranging from spontaneous to pre-planned, always using bi+ flags and other identity badges to reveal as a group in servicescapes. Since bi+ consumers are used to either concealing their identity, or worrying about the decision to conceal or reveal, the bi+ social group offers them ways to be more assertive in revealing their bi+ identity. In an analogy, groups of bi+ consumers act as a shoal, a collective that remains together without requiring all members to be moving together in the same direction (Miller and Gerlai 2012; Pitcher and Parrish

1993). Shoaling differs from schooling, which offers members higher synergy and the ability to cover distance much more quickly. Shoaling offers members similar protections and benefits while preserving more individual agency. As members of a shoal, bi+ consumers co-create safer spaces and map spaces of refuge.

Bi+ social meetings also take place in servicescapes. When this happens, meetings incorporate elements of the bi takeover events, as a territory for the bi+ social group is marked off. For these meetings, the bi+ group reserves a large table at a local café:

> The conference table is situated at the back of the coffee shop and surrounded by large windows on two sides. There is a glass partition between the conference table and the rest of the coffee shop affording some, but not total privacy. Someone has put up the bi-pride flag on the table. Other patrons are nearby working. Most have headphones in. Some look up at us occasionally before returning to their task.

The bi+ group visibly marks their territory by using a bi+ pride flag. However, the group is careful with the increased visibility. The group provides specific rules for appropriate ways of revealing one's identity in a space. The following group rules were shared in the bi+ social group's Facebook page by Lily (25, woman, customer service representative), as well as several meetings and events:

> Hello, bi/pan friends! I quickly want to clarify the intent of our events. I'm sure most of you are aware of the unwanted sexual objectification and advances bi people (especially femme presenting/identifying folks) are often on the receiving end of, and with that in mind, we want the space we're creating to be safe and comfortable for everyone. These events are

> designed to be platonic. Unwelcome sexual advances will result in you being asked to leave the group. If someone does something to make you uncomfortable please reach out to me or Alexander.
>
> And of course, homophobic, transphobic, racist or any kind of asshole remarks will also result in you being asked to leave.
>
> Thanks, and I hope to see you all soon!

These rules enable bi+ individuals to collectively reveal their identities without fear of falling into long-standing stereotypes of bi+ people as being sexually promiscuous.

The practice of co-creating safer spaces also allows the bi+ social group to identify future sites where members may return alone. Through these temporary sites of safety, the bi+ social group broadens the number of servicescapes to which bi+ people feel comfortable going. Because bi+ consumers have been well-received as a group, members feel more confident that they can approach the servicescape in the future and have a similar experience of being accepted and feeling safe in the space.

Similarly, fans of *Star Trek* often take part in the associated culture of consumption as a way to experience legitimization of their otherwise stigmatized identity. Kozinets (2001) finds that fans come together to collectively enact the *Star Trek* culture of consumption. “Trekkies” may signal their status by wearing signals and co-creating spaces where they are safe to act out their fantasy life. In much the same way, bi+ consumers come together to co-create spaces in which to reveal their stigmatized identity and consume in peace.

Mapping spaces of refuge. This collective practice of revealing refers to collecting and sharing information with identity peers on servicescapes where one's concealable stigmatized identity is likely to respected. I observed this practice particularly in the bi+ social group, which often circulates recommendations about servicescapes that are safe to visit for bi+ consumers. In the following conversation, bi+ consumers discuss servicescapes that have single use or gender-neutral bathrooms:

> Mika, "I wish somebody tracked buildings with single use bathrooms." Tyler replies, "That would be great to know." Valerie mentions that there is a way to find this out. At once, heads snap in her direction and the room is quiet. "[name] has created a list and keeps it updated. I can get you the contact information and they will share it with you." Immediately, several members slide paper and pen to Valerie to get the information.

Bathroom issues have typically been considered in the public discourse to be related to trans consumers. However, bi+ people often experience bathroom anxiety. The notion of gender segregated bathrooms is founded on the assumption that consumers are comfortable sharing a bathroom space with individuals of their gender. However, bi+ consumers (as well as gay and lesbian consumers) may experience attraction to others who share that bathroom space. This can cause significant worry and discomfort over whether one should be allowed in that space. By having a map that provides the nearest single stall bathroom, bi+ consumers are assured that a space of refuge is available to them should they need it. In fact, there is a mobile application and website devoted to just this need called, "Refuge Restrooms." The homepage consists of a search bar and the message, "Sometimes life is tough…Find Refuge" (Refuge Restrooms 2020).

Marketing researchers have long asserted that consumers are much more likely to share a negative shopping experience than a positive one (Kotler and Armstrong 2017). However, this finding does not quite fit the reality of bi+ consumers. Given that bi+ consumer experiences in servicescapes are often negative, what truly stands out for them are experiences in which they feel treated with dignity. Interviews and participant observation data indicate that bi+ consumers are likely to marvel at these experiences. This often resulted in hearing the same story multiple times as informants who had positive experiences were delighted to share and temporarily transport themselves back to that experience. For example, Xander, a 30-year old male-ish software engineer, recalls an experience he had at a bar he deemed to be bi+ inclusive:

> I was on vacation by myself, and I walked into a gay bar. There were people who had various queer identifiers. I'd sort of identified the bar as, not a bisexual bar, but so perfectly in the middle, that actually I felt totally comfortable, people were dancing, and I danced with a man…and it didn't matter that I was bisexual. And it just was really nice. So it's somewhere in the back of my mind, this very fond memory of like actually having that space where you don't have to watch your back.

Xander has told this story several times and recommends the bar name if bi+ social group members are ever visiting that city. Xander's eagerness to repeatedly do positive word-of-mouth for a place where he simply felt comfortable shines a light on what it feels like when one does find a space of refuge. When Kay (26, non-binary, nurse) finds a space of refuge, they are also sure to invite others there. When asked how Kay went about gathering this information for resource sharing, they say:

> Like, sometimes the baristas ask me what I'm up to or where I'm headed or whatever, and I tell 'em and there's just never a negative reaction. I mean I was talking to the guy who gave me my chai, about the burlesque, and he was like, "Oh yeah, I thought about maybe going to that, but I'm not going to get off early enough." And it's like, I have no idea if he's queer or not, but like the poster is hanging up here by the door, this is where I found out about it. So, it's definitely implied [we're] welcome.

In fact, Kay met members of the bi+ social group at this servicescape before heading over to the servicescape that was hosting the burlesque show. In this way, spaces of refuge become points on the map of inclusive servicescapes.

In sum, bi+ consumers regularly make the decision of whether to conceal or reveal their concealable stigmatized identity. At times, bi+ consumers make the difficult decision to conceal their stigmatized identity by withdrawing from the marketplace or camouflaging their stigmatized identities. In doing so, bi+ consumers must make a trade-off between getting their needs met and being accepted for who they are. At other times, bi+ consumers reveal their stigmatized identity either individually through narrowcasting, broadcasting, and downplaying, or collectively through co-creating safer spaces or mapping spaces of refuge. These findings answer to the first objective of this dissertation, how individuals with concealable stigmatized identities participate servicescapes and balance their consumption and well-being needs.

In the next part of this chapter, I present findings pertinent to the second objective of this dissertation, how and why service providers create and maintain inclusive servicescapes for a variety of diverse and stigmatized individuals.

MARKETING SAFETY TO INVISIBLE CONSUMERS

As owners and operators of servicescapes, service providers have an opportunity to design spaces and interactions in a way that prevent stigma experiences for diverse consumers. Indeed, many servicescapes are making the choice to be a "safer space." Potter (2019, 11) defines safer space and distinguishes this from the more used term of "safe space":

> [t]here is no such thing as an entirely safe space. No one's safety or comfort can be guaranteed 100 percent of the time.... It's important to point out that, as I use the term, a "safer space" is not one free of challenging ideas or different opinions. It's not about avoiding exposure to people who are different from you. It doesn't even promise that harassment and violence will never happen. But we can always make spaces safer, first by acknowledging that some people are discriminated against just for being who they are, and then by doing what we can to ensure they are believed and supported if it happens on our watch.

While more service providers are making the decision to create and maintain inclusive or "safer" servicescapes, there still exists scant research about (1) how and why service providers make this decision, (2) how service providers implement the decision, and (3) what challenges to this goal look like and what service providers do when these challenges occur. I provide answers to these questions in turn.

Deciding to be an Inclusive Servicescape

Service providers choose to create an inclusive servicescapes for two main complementary reasons: their personal views on inclusiveness and the recognition of an underserved market segment.

Personal Views. Business owners often decide to create and maintain an inclusive servicescape due to their understanding of the "right way" to do business. When asked what factored into his decision to make The Downtown Café an inclusive servicescape, Nick (owner) responded, "Because it's the right thing to do. Plain and simple." To the same question, Rachel (owner, brewery) promptly reacted, "I just think it's about who you are as a person. So, I don't know how you teach somebody that's an asshole not to be an asshole (laughs)."

For some service providers, religiosity underlies the decision to create and maintain an inclusive servicescape. When asked what he's most proud of on the topic of inclusion at Midwest CrossFit, Chad (owner) says:

> I'm Christian, and then like a couple of our other staff members are Christian as well. I'm most proud that we have a culture in our gym that is welcoming to everyone, even though I feel like there's a bad perception of Christianity with just, even political stuff, you know? 'Cause like, I feel like that has gotten turned into a weird thing. And I don't wanna go into that. But, because I feel like Christians are perceived as being exclusive, that we've created a culture that is inclusive, and includes everyone, because I openly feel that what Jesus lived for was including everybody.

The choice to create an inclusive environment is, thus, extremely personal, often tied to one's background rather than to a deliberate, sequential analysis (Allen 2002). Service providers of inclusive servicescapes hardly consider another way to run their business.

As such, the perception that one's business provides an inclusive environment produces a deep sense of pride. Eleanor (general manger), a queer woman, likes to see other queer people occupying space in the servicescape she manages. To her, this is a sign of success, but it is also personally satisfying: "It's nice to see a couple of, any couple, anybody, it doesn't even matter, but it is really nice to see gay couples come in just feeling at home." Similarly, Marie (founder) shares that the mission of Interconnected Psychology is deeply personal to her and her staff, and this has caused her to feel vulnerable and emotional throughout the first year of the practice:

> [Inclusion] is not an afterthought. That it's not just—something that we do in the month of June, right, but the whole place is… kind of developed around being inclusive and affirming. And I have to say as like fresh and raw as a lot of it still is for me emotionally, I feel proud that I stayed true to that, even if it meant having to relinquish relationships. There's a whole lot of vulnerability that has come with it. So I'm proud to have sustained that kind of vulnerability for this extended period of time.

Marie is referring to both personal and professional vulnerability. Personally, Marie experienced prolonged vulnerability due to all of the emotions associated with getting a new business off the ground. Professionally, Marie's business also became vulnerable when early in its lifespan, she had to let one of the key providers go because they were not embodying the inclusive mission. Service providers' views on "the right thing to do"

are often grounded in their personal encounters with inequality, as either victims or direct witnesses. When relating such experiences, many service providers became emotional. For example, consider Nick's (owner, café) story about the previous owners of his business, a gay couple, and how one was not allowed to visit the other in the hospital in the 1990s, before same-gender marriage was legalized in the United States:

> When I took over The Downtown Café, I worked for a gay couple, and that's who I bought The Downtown Café from actually. But I worked at their bakery. And, uh, one of 'em got sick one day and they had to go to the hospital, and they wouldn't allow his partner to go into the room, because he wasn't, quote, family. Even though they had been together for years, and it was his partner. Because back then you couldn't marry. Um, and it was (he starts to cry) it was heartbreaking. So, what else? Sorry, I'm so sorry.

For service providers, such encounters with inequality become formative experiences that trigger a strong empathy for individuals different from themselves.

In addition to encounters with structural forms of inequality, direct experiences with limited market offerings to diverse consumers shape service providers' views of their businesses' mission. When Leah (owner, vegan restaurant) became vegan, she struggled to find any servicescape that catered to her diet. Therefore, Leah's goal with opening Sweet Parsnip's was to provide tasty vegan cuisine, similar to comfort food that accommodates a wide range of diets and food restrictions. Leah shares:

> I think it was, started from such a personal experience of my own, where I didn't have any dietary issues or allergies I guess, but, just, I knew

> personally, this is a diet, this is a lifestyle I wanted to live. And like I couldn't. Like it wasn't widely accepted. There weren't any easy options out there. There wasn't any place I could go dine. And so then as I was just educating myself, I was like wow, you know, there's, you know, 7 huge allergens: corn, soy, peanuts, shellfish, blah, blah, blah, you know, butter, dairy. And so I was like wow, how cool would it be to create a restaurant that really eliminated most of those. So these people in our world that, and I feel like allergies to certain food products are becoming more and more, you know, common. And so I was like how cool it would be to create a restaurant that accommodated all those. So these people who you know, really don't have a safe place to go eat. So I wanted to create that for people.

Leah's lived experience has directly shaped her vision to create a restaurant that is inclusive to all identities, including dietary and social

It appears that service providers' views on inclusivity can be accentuated by the broader cultural environment. These providers often mentioned the uncertainty that followed the 2016 United States' presidential election. Based on the views expressed by the new president, many worried about whether consumers with stigmatized identities would feel welcome in many servicescapes, or even if they would chance trying out a new servicescape that they knew little about. In response, many decided to hang inclusivity signs and stickers with "you are safe here" in their front windows. Bridget (owner, boutique) recalls her decision to put up the sticker in her window:

> I mean I guess when I was asked to put it up, my initial thought was just I want anyone who's walking by to know that they're welcome here no matter what. It was sort of like a weird time. I feel like it was right after the election and ooh, I don't think I wanna talk about this; it's gonna be too much for me (she starts to cry). It just sorta felt like—it feels silly to have to put that on a door. And so I just thought like, you know, if someone—if it's there, and if that is a real concern, then of course I would want everyone who is out there to know that they're welcome here no matter what. Oh. How do you do this?

Bridget gets quite emotional when she recalls the period of time following the 2016 election. For her, the idea that anyone would be walking down the street uncertain of which spaces were safe and which were not is almost too much to think about. Indeed, many service providers recall this same time period as a time of sadness and uncertainty.

Recognition of an Underserved Market Segment. As demonstrated in the consumer portion of this chapter, consumers with stigmatized identities tend to be underserved in the marketplace. Service providers are sensitive to the business opportunity this situation offers as illustrated by Eleanor (general manager):

> From a business perspective, yea I'm having those board meetings saying, "How can we appeal to the gay community? What can we do at Pride this year that we didn't do last year? How can we get our logo out there? How can we spread the word to our neighbors that when their gay friends come

> in, or when their friends come in period, they can stay at the Olde City Inns and be in a welcoming place?"

Many service providers are well aware of the "gay dollar," a term that alludes to perceptions of affluence and opportunities for profit among the queer community (Peñaloza 1996). The importance of spending one's time and money in an inclusive space becomes even more obvious, when one considers the reality of individuals such as bi+ consumers. Service providers know this, and often seek to provide spaces and events that cater to consumers with stigmatized identities. Nick (owner) shares plans he had for the backroom at The Downtown Café:

> I wanted to do like some sort of a drag show, and different things 'cause we close early now. We used to be open till 2:00 a.m., and then we went to midnight, and then 11:00 and then 10:00, and now 7:00, because there's just not a lot of business at night. So we have all that 7:00 p.m. to midnight space that we could be using the store for something. So I would love to do drag shows, or have meetings, or coffee tastings, or, maybe fundraisers or something, you know, for whatever cause we choose to, to support. I really wanted the drag show to go through because I was really excited about it, 'cause I used to go to the drag shows when there was a place downtown, but it burned down.

Nick realizes the profitability of optimizing the space of The Downtown Café, as well as potentially re-expanding the hours of operation, to meet an unmet market need. Previously there was a place in town that offered drag shows, but that servicescape burned down. Nick recalls fondly the times he attended the drag shows and desires to

recreate this experience for himself and his patrons. By doing so, Nick could cash in by offering a service he knows is already a crowd pleaser.

While some service providers may be aware of this unmet market need prior to opening their business or offering a new service, many learn that they are filling a market need that few others do when they receive feedback from patrons and staff. Cynthia (owner, bakery) shares one example:

> I met an older couple about a year ago—they overheard that I own Cornflower Bakery—and told us how much the bakery means to their 13-year-old granddaughter who came out as gay last year to her family. She wanted to take her grandma to the bakery and showed her the "safe space" sticker when they walked in.

While Cynthia always knew that she wanted her business to be a safe space for all people, this type of feedback is instrumental in reinforcing to service providers that this is indeed something of value they offer. Similarly, Shannon (general manager, bookstore and café) shares a time that a parent saw the trans pride flag hanging in Blue River Books and Café from out on the street. Seeing the flag through the window, and recently having had a child come out as trans, the parent came into the shop to find information and resources. Shannon shares this touching story between the parent and a staff member who also identifies as trans:

> We did intentionally—our community team manager chose some important flags for the front of the store as well, so that as soon as you walk in, you know what the values are [of Blue River]. And that's led to some really great interactions with customers who say have like, seen the

> trans flag, which you can see from our front door and come in looking for resources to understand the trans experience because they have a kid who's coming out or transitioning and that led them to like, in one case, that led someone to approach a staff member they didn't even realize was trans and ask some questions and had an opportunity for someone to really share their own experience and help them through that, which is like— (starts to cry) I can't believe that happens here.

Blue River Books & Café not only provides an inclusive space for consumers and staff with concealable stigmatized identities, but for their friends and family as well. Shannon gets emotional talking about the experience of filling this important and largely unmet market need, by seeing a transformative interaction between a trans staff member and a parent of a trans kid.

As shown in the data, service providers take the decision to offer an inclusive servicescape to heart, based on their own views and the familiarity with underserved groups of consumers. Due to the lack of a formal market analysis to inform this decision-making process, it may appear as if the decision is unimportant. In fact, the opposite is closer to the truth. Service providers are deeply invested in the decision, making it a central aspect of their businesses. Next, I explain how they translate this decision into actions.

Implementing Inclusion in Servicescapes

Service providers rely on signals or codes to communicate their mission of inclusion to their staff and customers. Service providers use these signals to encode information

about the servicescape being inclusive. Customers, such as bi+ consumers, who regularly experience the desire for an inclusive servicescape, become familiar with decoding these signals. In each of the following sub-themes, I provide examples of what these signals or codes look like and how they are decoded by consumers and oftentimes staff.

Each of these signals, once implemented, become a part of the overall vibe of the servicescape. Service providers and bi+ consumers alike note the importance of the "vibe" of a servicescape. The vibe is akin to what Bitner (1992) dubbed the "perceived servicescape." The vibe gives customers and staff and overall perception of the servicescape such as what type of place it is and what is generally considered acceptable behavior in that space. Service provider and consumer informants each brought up the importance of the vibe of particular servicescapes, but often had a difficult time identifying just what makes up the vibe. Here I provide illustrative quotes of the important yet abstract nature of a servicescape's vibe.

Sadie (26, woman, sales manager), a bi+ consumer and service provider, offers an informative description of one inclusive servicescape in this sample, Blue River Books & Café and an ice cream shop that has space in the same building:

> And you know, [the staff] immediately know me and they remember me, and they always call me by name, and I mean of course you kind of get that treatment at a lot of local coffee places, but it's just different here, you know? I mean you see a lot of the same faces, because people come back 'cause they love it. But also, it's just—cozy, comfy, feels like home. I like being here—And then, across the hallway, (name of ice cream shop) is also another awesome [place]. I mean you can walk in there and be like

> someone threw up gay all over this. Someone sneezed and all the gay came out and then it just like hit all the walls. It is so awesome. (Laughs)

Though the vibe of a servicescape is difficult to define, Sadie notes that it's a feeling of comfort one has when they enter the space and the sense that the staff know her (Rosenbaum 2005).

The staff of a business is also an important aspect of the overall vibe of the servicescape. The staff may have unconcealable stigmatized identities that customers notice. Staff may also have concealable stigmatized identities that they express using signals or codes, similar to the servicescape itself. Many bi+ consumers and service providers in the current study note that they pay attention to the visibility of the staff in a servicescape as an indicator of the vibe and inclusion of the space. For example, Nick (owner, café) shares, "You know, a while back—I had, oh gosh, 3 or 4 transgender people working here, and 2 gay people." For Nick, this is important because it reflects the inclusive vibe of The Downtown Café; if LGBTQ+ folks feel comfortable and empowered working in this space, then customers are likely to see that and continue to approach the servicescape. Nick goes on to say:

> I've had several employees come out of the closet so to speak. I don't like that term either. But, um—and several that were maybe—um—apprehensive about you know having a, a boyfriend, you know, (and) embrace it, because they felt empowered, you know by—being here. [I] had a few people become drag queens you know. And, and I don't think it's because they work here, but I think it's, a lot of it might be because they felt supported, like this is okay, there's nothin' wrong with what

> you're doin' here. Just be yourself. If that's what you wanna do, do it. I don't care, it's your deal. I don't give a shit.

This empowerment of staff with stigmatized identities is a sentiment shared by other inclusive servicescapes as an indicator that not only are staff feeling included, but consumers as well.

Kay (26, non-binary, nurse), a consumer informant, shares their perspective on the matter. When asked how Kay identified a particular servicescape as inclusive, they said, "um—probably partly like the general progressive vibe, and, partly the types of posters that get put up over here on the windows. And—partly like, uh—just—the fact that they have staff here who I read as queer." For Kay, the vibe of an inclusive servicescape includes the feeling of the space, what gets hung in the windows, and the identity expression of the staff. Marie (founder, psychological practice) reiterates the importance of having staff who self-identify as a member of a marginalized group and consider inclusion a personal matter, because this translates into better care of their clients and an inclusive vibe:

> Of our current staff, we all either are from within the queer community or have a close family member that somehow—is. And—so—it's personal to everybody. And I don't think that there's anybody here who would—not say that the personal is political and the political is personal, and that we find a way within our work to be ethical about that, um—and to have some transparency about identity. Um—and also that it's not about us, you know.

In addition to the physical dimensions of the servicescape and staff, service providers pay particular attention to the vibe of their businesses and communicate this through social media. When asked how she communicates the inclusiveness of her business, Leah (owner, vegan restaurant) says, “um, not—explicitly. I can’t think of, of one post where I might have… other than saying, you know, everyone is welcome at Sweet Parsnip’s…I hope people can feel our— spirit of inclusivity on social media. But I can’t say that I’ve ever like explicitly stated that.” Though social media is a popular tool that many servicescapes use to promote the inclusivity of their space, Leah sees her posts as an extension of the overall vibe of Sweet Parsnip’s, her vegan restaurant. Hence, the vibe of a servicescape is an important indicator of inclusion and is expressed through the overall feel of the space, artifacts that appear in the space, the self-expression of the staff, and communications efforts such as social media posts.

In the following subthemes I deconstruct the vibe of inclusive servicescapes in order to gain a better understanding of the signals used to communication inclusion, and how service providers deploy these signals in their efforts.

Implementing Inclusion through Physical Layout. Service providers utilize the physical space of their servicescape in order to communicate and demonstrate inclusion to various identities. An important environment dimension of inclusive servicescapes is the bathroom. Inclusive servicescapes often have single-stall bathrooms. Since only one person can use the bathroom at a time, these can be labeled “all-gender” and are not labeled for a specific gender like many public bathrooms with multiple stalls. As mentioned in the consumer findings, all gender bathrooms provide consumers with

concealable stigmatized identities with a space of refuge from the drama of everyday life. Gender segregated bathrooms are not inclusive to all consumers and staff, as LGBTQ+ people often experience significant anxiety in gendered spaces such as bathrooms. The assumption behind gender segregated bathrooms is that anyone who enters feels comfortable using the bathroom surrounded by members of a particular gender. This is not true for LGBTQ+ people, which is why all gender bathrooms are a preferred environmental dimension of inclusive servicescapes. Additionally, single-stall bathrooms are also accessible to consumers with various physical disabilities and can enable consumers to experience a sense of normalcy in retail establishments (Baker 2006).

Nick (owner, café) explains how he decided to make the bathrooms at The Downtown Café available to all genders:

> I think I, you know, maybe I read an article in the paper, or somethin' about—one of those types a deals where somebody was like you can't use this bathroom or you can't go in there, or whatever. Um—and I was like fuck that and we're gonna make sure that people know that we don't care—what you identify as. The bathrooms are for your use. And I put locks on each of 'em, so that you know, it's a single. Which is different than if you had a public, you know, like a 4 staller.

Nick made the decision to label the single-stall bathrooms in The Downtown Café after he read a news story about a transperson being harassed for using a public, gender-specific bathroom. On the door of one of the bathrooms, a sign hangs that says "we don't care."

Figure 1

As discussed earlier, many servicescapes get listed on the online service, Refuge Restrooms, so that consumers can find the nearest all gender bathroom. The Downtown Café and Interconnected Psychology are both listed in this directory. Accompanying these entries are also comments about where the bathrooms are located within the servicescape, and what type of condition they are in. Being recognized for having all gender bathrooms is a point of pride and distinction for many service providers. For example, Marie (founder, psychological practice) shares:

> We have all gender restrooms here—I can't tell you the number of people who have stood outside those bathrooms and taken pictures of the sign. Either just of the signs, or like, themselves with a peace sign in front of it.

> (Laughs) Or, "Oh, I'm gonna send this to my so and so employer because they say you can't do it, but here, it's obvious that you can." There's lots of that.

As Marie's comment illustrates, servicescapes that are currently doing the work towards being inclusive spaces often play a large role in educating consumers and other service providers about what inclusion looks like and how it can be accomplished in a service environment. Another service provider, Monica (barista, café), reiterates the importance of inclusive environmental dimensions such as all-gender bathrooms. Monica identifies as a woman and came out as trans in her late teens. She speaks from the position of both a consumer and a service provider when she discusses the importance of inclusive environmental dimensions to servicescapes, such as bathrooms:

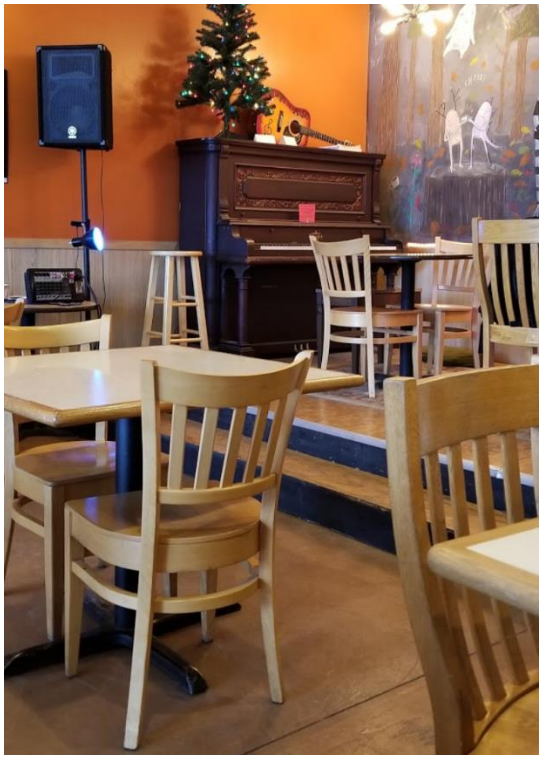
> Well, a safe space for a trans person is—it's a place where we feel comfortable using the restroom, right. That can be accomplished in a lot a ways. Usually signage is a good way, so that everybody can see that. So, uh, gender neutral bathrooms are a good way that people can do that. Stickers in the window, right, near the front door is a good way, that, that people can accomplish that too. You know, a safe space sticker, an all-inclusive sticker, you know, LGBT ally sticker, on the front door—that's something that I notice right away.

Therefore, bathrooms are an important signal of inclusion in servicescapes, one that consumers and service providers alike consider important. Even if the servicescape does not have a sign stating the bathrooms are open to "all genders," simply having single-stall

bathrooms is enough to be considered a space of refuge, or signal of safety, for consumers with concealable stigmatized identities.

Another important physical dimension of inclusive servicescapes refers to the ways in which different spaces are utilized by the service provider and patrons. Figure 2 illustrates an example of utilizing the physical space in a servicescape in order to foster a sense of community. Pictured is an inclusive coffee house complete with a stage for community members to share music, poetry, and wares. As mentioned earlier, Nick (owner) has similar plans for the back room of The Downtown Café to be a relaxed space where LGBTQ+ and other marginalized groups can gather and have community events. He hopes that his staff who share those identities will help steer this initiative and further add to the inclusive vibe of The Downtown Café. Arguably, this initiative may be seen as relegating consumers with stigmatized identities to the back of the servicescape. However, based on the consumer findings already presented, this strategy allows such consumers a space to meet that offers a small bit of privacy in an otherwise public servicescape.

Figure 2



A final dimension of the physical servicescape that enables service providers to implement an inclusive servicescape, is the staging of a customer's first impression. Marie (founder, psychological practice) notes:

> I think it comes from when you walk in the door. If you weren't able to walk in the door, could you get in the door? I've done a lot of training with Stephanie, the front desk person. She is the first face [people see]. I sent her to a training in Philadelphia about providing other trainings for community members around trans issues. And so I feel like it has been really important to educate her as the first face that someone sees, about trans issues, so that she can use proper pronouns with people [and] we have a system within our electronic health records so that if someone

> chooses to be addressed in a certain way that that is what comes up. Even if that's not their legal name, but it's attached to their file, you know. Pronouns, there's a, a whole thing about that. So, from the first encounter, to the art that people see in the waiting room to being back here, all of that signifies a safe space to me.

Marie considers the accessibility of the entrance, the identity of the receptionist, the décor of the waiting area, as well as the nature of the first encounter. Marie has thought through how to stage that first service encounter in a way that is inclusive and affirming to a variety of stigmatized identities, both concealable and unconcealable. This staging requires an eye for the physical dimensions of the servicescape, as well as the personnel and associated systems.

Implementing Inclusion through Point of Sale Communications. Service providers often find ways to communication their mission of inclusion through signals at the point of sale. Some signals are signs that have explicit statements such as "all are welcome here," "we serve everybody," and "you are safe here" (see Figures 3 and 4). The placement of this signage enables consumers to interpret and experience inclusion at the moment they make a purchase. This placement and timing enable consumers to tie their service experience to feelings of inclusion. These may be signs that explicitly have these phrases, or coded messages such as a rainbow flag. For example, Cornflower Bakery has several stickers in the window of the shop one of which says, "you are safe here."

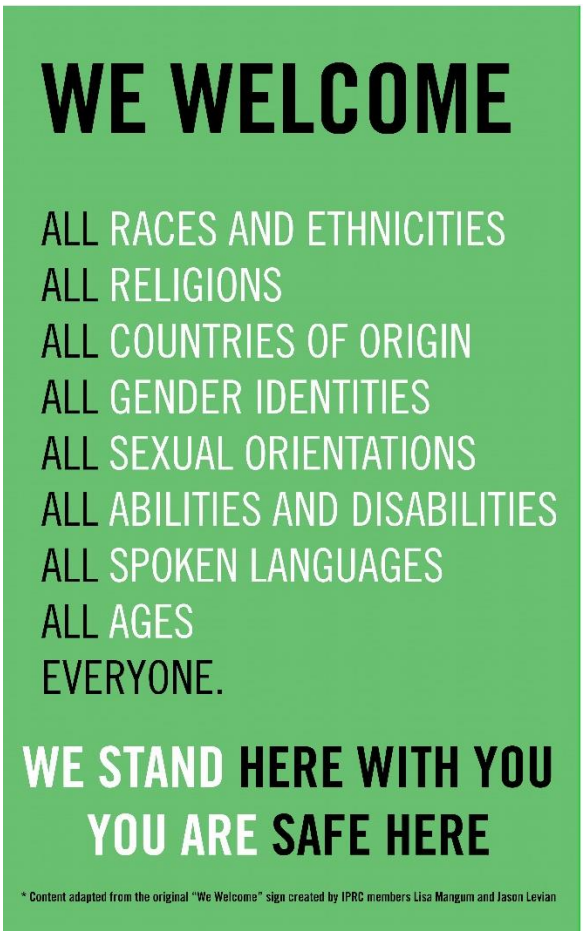
Figure 3

Cynthia (owner, bakery), describes her decision-making progress regarding making it an inclusive servicescape:

> This is a complete no-brainer for me. I believe people should not be discriminated against for race, religion, gender or sexual identification, and I absolutely knew that Cornflower had to call itself out as a safe place for all people.

Even before she opened her shop, Cynthia wanted inclusion to be a core aspect of her business. Similarly, Rachel and her husband, the co-owners of Galactic Cluster Brewery (GCB), always "knew" this would be a prominent aspect of their servicescape. Rachel describes the decision-making process behind hanging signs that say, "Everybody is Welcome Regardless of…" followed by a list of identities:

Figure 4



I've seen them in smaller local businesses in the past. And so, it was just another thing that was like, when this is a thing, we're putting this up, because it's important to us. And we think that it should be known. Right? So especially if, you know, you're a part of any of those groups, like I just, I don't want you to feel uncomfortable here. I want you to know that, you know, we don't care, to whatever be whoever. We're fine with that. So I searched to try to find a sign like that with that kind of...and so I found it online. And it was a downloadable PDF. So it was super easy, like,

> perfect. We'll hang this up. And so we hung them in each of the bathrooms just kind of off the sink—that was originally where they both were. So, there was one in each bathroom.

Rachel draws on her knowledge as a consumer to recall times when she has seen signage in servicescapes describing the space as inclusive. As Rachel and her husband got closer to opening their brewery and taproom, they agreed that having such a sign would very important to them and their business. The decision was made to hang two signs in the space – one in the men's bathroom, and one in the women's bathroom. Like Rachel, Leah (owner, vegan restaurant) used her experience as a consumer on vacation to rethink how to communicate inclusion in her own business back home:

> It was a no brainer. I was in, actually, um—Colorado this summer and I was at a store in downtown Denver, it's a really popular vegan spot to go eat. And they had just a bucket of, you know, [rainbow] flags. And I was like oh, like I'm gonna buy one and stick it in my little sandwich board sign that I put outside all this summer.

Again, Leah discusses this decision as a "no brainer" and acquires her first inclusion signal from another inclusive vegan servicescape. Leah recalls how the rainbow flag she had placed on her sidewalk sandwich board kept being stolen. She eventually ordered a large quantity of rainbow flags from Amazon.com and put them in a mason jar on the front counter where customers could take one for free.

Service providers who seek to offer an inclusive servicescape generally agree that such signage is a positive element of their space yet experience unease that a sign is even necessary. To this point, Leah states:

> It saddens me that like we have to, like have posters telling people that we're decent human beings. Like it perplexes me. I hope someday I live in a world where—you don't have to have signs reminding people that we're good humans. So, here we are.

While having signage that attests to the servicescape being an inclusive space with "decent human beings" inside is important to service providers, it is a reminder of the harsh reality that many spaces are not generally inclusive. As discussed in the following theme, many inclusive servicescapes have "all-gender" bathrooms as well as signage that points to this fact. As previously mentioned, having an all-gender or single-stall accessible bathroom available reduces the anxiety of bi+ consumers as well as consumers with other stigmatized identities. This is an important feature of inclusive servicescapes or spaces of refuge, one that consumers take part in mapping, as discussed above in the consumer findings.

Figure 5

Explicit messaging of inclusion, such as “you are safe here” signs, serves as an invitation for consumers to take part in approach behaviors such as staying, making a purchase, and spending time in the servicescape. This type of messaging is quickly and clearly understood by consumers with stigmatized identities, such as bi+ consumers. Moreover, such signals often become the subject of word-of-mouth for stigmatized consumers, as evidenced by the consumer findings. Service providers implement inclusion in their servicescape by utilizing point of sale signage that reinforces their positioning as an inclusive servicescape. They do this by utilizing signage with which stigmatized consumers are familiar.

Another point of sale signal that servicescapes utilize to implement inclusion is the use of community boards and calendars. Community boards are often a sort of "community bulletin board" within a servicescape in which patrons can hang information about happenings. Here, the servicescape can promote sponsored events and promote community events that align with their overall "vibe" of being an inclusive servicescape. Figures 6 and 7 show these community spaces for a small local inclusive servicescape and for a global servicescape, respectively. Each purport to be an inclusive servicescape and indeed the materials posted to these boards attest to that positioning. Each community board includes flyers for community events that serve marginalized communities, including the LGBTQ+ community. As is evident in Figure 7, these community boards often appear by the entrance of the servicescape and are sometimes visible from outside when one looks in through a window. Such community boards offer a clear signal of the servicescape's commitment to offering an inclusive space.

Figure 6

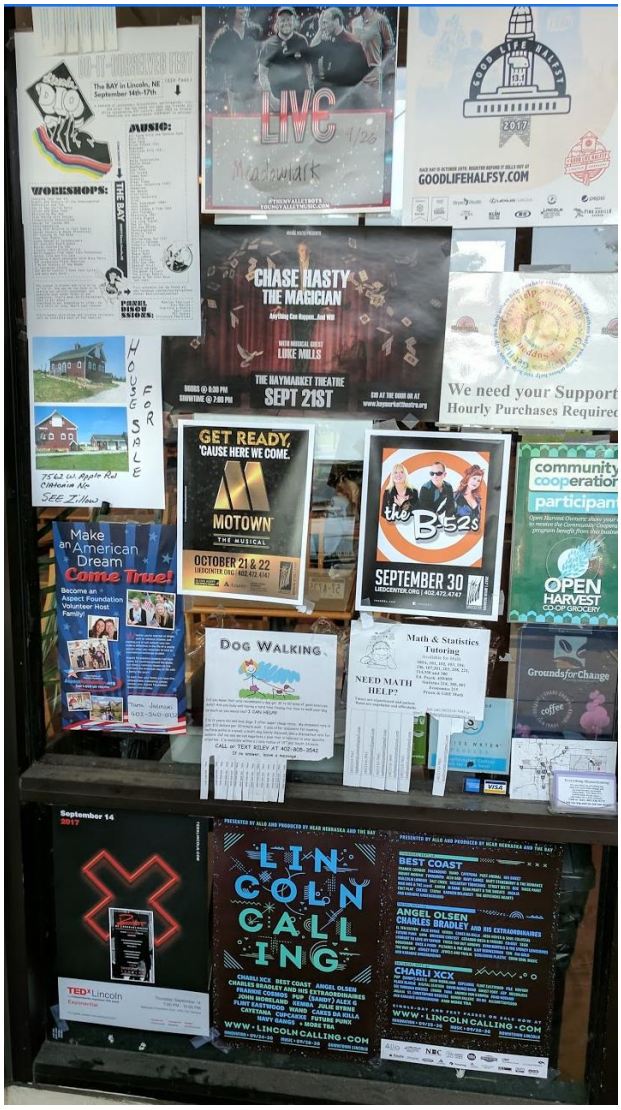

LIVE
Meadowmark
GOODLIFEHALFSY.COM
CHASE HASTY
THE MAGICIAN
LOKE MILLS
THE HAYMARKET THEATRE
SEPT 21ST
We need your Support
Hourly Purchases Required
GET READY,
'CAUSE HERE WE COME.
MOTOWN
THE MUSICAL
OCTOBER 21 & 22
the B-52s
SEPTEMBER 30
community
cooperation
participant
OPEN HARVEST
CO-OP GROCERY
Make an American Dream Come True!
Become an Aspect Foundation Volunteer Host Family
DOG WALKING
Math & Statistics Tutoring
NEED MATH HELP?
Grounds for Change
HOUSE SALE
7562 W. Apple Rd
Clinton Ne
SEE Zillow
WORKSHOPS:
MUSIC:
THE BAY
PANEL DISCUSSIONS:
September 14
2017
TEDxLincoln
LIN
COLN
CALL
ING
BEST COAST
ANGEL OLSEN
CHARLES BRADLEY AND HIS EXTRAORDINAIRES
CHARLI XCX
WWW.LINCOLNCALLING.COM

Figure 7

As noted, many inclusive servicescapes also promote events that they host through a community calendar of some sort which also appears in the physical servicescape, as well as online either on their website or social media. These inclusive signals at the point of sale reinforce the inclusive vibe of the servicescape and may act as an invitation for consumers from similar backgrounds to return to the servicescape for an event.

Implementing Inclusion through Staff-Customer Interactions. In addition to signage at the point of sale, the service interaction provides another key opportunity to implement inclusion in the servicescape. Many servicescapes adopt the mantra, “actions speak louder than words,” and believe that their mission to provide an inclusive space should

come through in the service interaction, more so than in any marketing effort. For example, Rachel (owner, brewery) states:

> Hopefully it comes across more in the way that we treat our customers and the way that we treat our staff and, you know, the way that we talk to people, etc. I think we try to be super welcoming and you know, we're happy you're here and we'll do what it takes to keep you happy.

Another way that inclusive servicescapes approach the service interaction is to be forthcoming with their unique value offering and engage customers in a dialogue about their particular needs. For example, Leah owns Sweet Parsnip's, a vegan restaurant that caters to individuals with a variety of diet restrictions due to food allergies. Thus, Sweet Parsnip's is a servicescape that is inclusive to almost all diets and identities. Leah gives an example of her forward-thinking approach to inclusion in the service interaction:

> In fact, I just had a gluten free customer behind us, and I was talkin' to her about the special [of the day]. And I [said that I] haven't been able to source a quality vegan, gluten free bread. And (referring to the special), she's like, "Yeah, but I [figured] that bread isn't gluten free." You know 'cause again it's like well I didn't know she was gluten-free, you know? Sometimes we are good about asking, especially if somebody's new to Sweet Parsnip's, we'll ask, "Oh, have you been to Sweet Parsnip's before?" And they're like "Oh no, first time." "Great. If you have any you know dietary restrictions or allergens, things are clearly marked on the menu. You know, let me know what questions you have." So being forward thinking with that is helpful. But her feedback to me was so kind

> and warm. She's like "I'm just so happy that I have more than one option here," you know. And she's like, "No, don't be sorry, this is wonderful." So, it's really cool to know that—while we aren't perfect, you know, we're still making a lot a people happy.

Interactions such as this one, enable Leah to clearly share what her business is all about and share information with the customer that helps them to stay safe and feel welcome. Leah often remembers customer's unique dietary restrictions and tells them about new items on the menu that fits their requirements. While this is not possible with all servicescapes, having a menu with a clear guide is possible. Leah provides a key, similar to a code, on the menu at Sweet Parsnip's so customers can decipher which items will fit their diet. The menu assists staff with service interactions and often provides a foundation for customers to be informed about the business's offerings.

A common finding among inclusive servicescapes is celebration. Interesting to note, celebrations of successfully revealing one's bi+ identity was a key finding of the consumer portion of this study. In fact, the Bisexual Resource Center (2019), gives presentations and trainings on the importance of bringing joy into bi+ spaces. Given the stigma that bi+ and other stigmatized consumers face in everyday life, inclusive spaces centered around positivity become very important. For servicescapes, centering the service interaction around celebrations enables them to foster a positive culture and inclusive environment. Chad shares:

> I mean, our goal is to celebrate our clients' success, like their wins. And within that—one of the things that our coaches—are supposed to do, is to give fist bumps and celebrate anything small that happens. And by doing

> that, we feel like that just spreads to everyone in the gym, celebrating success. And it's more of like—establishing that culture with our staff, because whatever we do, the members in our gym are gonna follow suite and create a culture that is accepting and inclusive and fun and positive and—all those things.

Chad and the rest of the staff at Midwest CrossFit create and maintain an inclusive servicescape by celebrating anything positive a member does or takes part in while at the gym. This enables that particular member to feel included, the staff member to feel good about embracing that member into the gym's culture, and onlooking members and staff to feel good about the interaction that just took place and a shared feeling of inclusion. Service interactions play an important role in fostering an inclusive environment, and this can be accomplished by focusing on treating every customer well, being forward-thinking about the needs of marginalized customers, and by celebrating customer accomplishments.

Implementing Inclusion through External Communications and Engagement. Not every practice of implementing an inclusive servicescape appears in the physical servicescape. In fact, many appear on social media, either on the company's profile or bio, in their original posts, or in interactions with consumers. Since bi+ consumers, and likely others with concealable stigmatized identities, often avoid engaging in servicescapes for a long period of time, they rely on information they can gather from other individuals and from resources at their disposal, such as social media. Thus, service

providers can signal to potential customers that they are an inclusive space, even if that person has never set foot in the physical servicescape or is unaware of the business.

For example, The Downtown Café sends signals of inclusion in the types of language they use in their Facebook and Instagram posts. For example, a recent post reads, “It’s Saturday, folx! Come enjoy a comfy atmosphere while you sip your coffee!”

Figure 8

The term “folx” is considered a queer and all-gender inclusive form of the traditional “folks” or “guys” which are terms that often get used to communicate to large groups of people. The Downtown Café is able to use language as a code to reach queer and other

underserved followers on social media and let them know that The Downtown Café shares their language and is a safe place for consumers with diverse identities.

For Interconnected Psychology, Marie uses Facebook to educate the public about the needs of underserved consumers, such as bi+ consumers, and signal that Interconnected is an inclusive space. Marie (founder) recalls that her very first post on the Interconnected Facebook page was about the all-gender bathrooms:

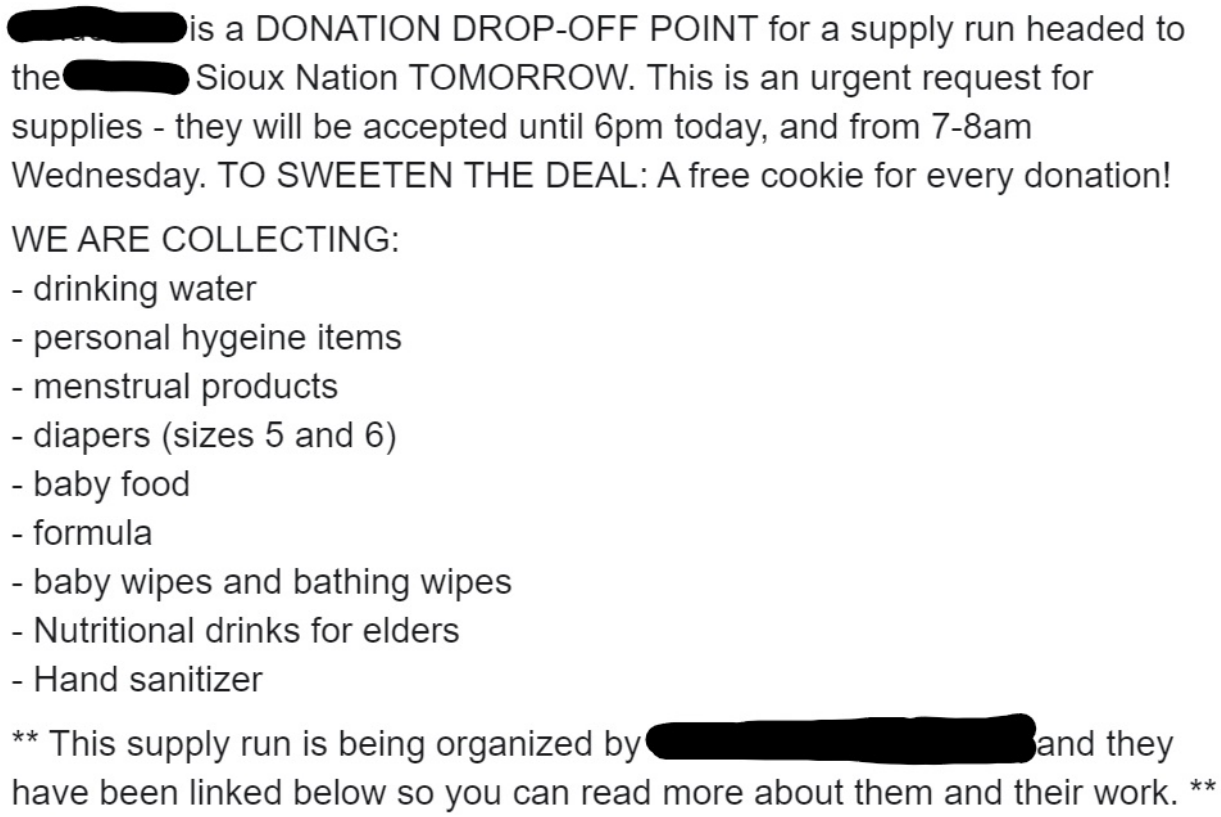
> And, yeah, it was the very first Facebook post that I made. And oh my gosh— 'cause that's such an issue anyway, right? For whatever reason. But here is this brand-new place, and I'm saying "We have all gender restrooms!" And you have these people who are like "Ah! [that's] revolutionary [and] finally," and other people are like, "I don't get it. I wouldn't want to use a restroom with men." It's hilarious. But you know and for me to just say, "You know it's just like the bathroom at home. One toilet, one locked door." And, you know to just be providing education like that in a pretty nonthreatening way, like—this is so not a big deal if it's not like [intended] for you. But for other people, this is a gigantic deal. Like when people can come here from their blue collar job, and then go into the bathroom and spend half an hour in there, and then come out as they wish they could be at their job, to have their therapy session. And, like it's not anything out of the ordinary, they don't have to figure out like, "Okay which of those bathrooms then do I walk into, if [I'm going to look different when I come out]." So gender neutral restrooms have been a big deal.

Figure 9

In this single post, Marie sends a signal to LGBTQ+ consumers about Interconnected being an inclusive servicescape and educate other consumers on what an all-gender bathroom actually is and why it's important to many people. By addressing this topic on social media, Marie is able to carefully craft her posts and replies in a non-threatening way. Additionally, social media platforms allow the user who made the post (in this case, Interconnected Psychology) to delete comments and replies if the user deems them to be inappropriate. Therefore, Marie can manage the online reputation of her business as she promotes it as an inclusive servicescape.

Cynthia, owner of Cornflower Bakery, communicates inclusion by regularly giving back to nonprofit organizations that support marginalized groups in the local community. Through Facebook and Instagram, she says, “I try to communicate the organizations we support and donate to, which are always as diverse as possible.” On social media, Cynthia is able to include appropriate links to the nonprofit organization in the post. This enables followers to see for themselves the ways Cornflower is serving typically underserved segments of the community, possibly segments these followers belong to themselves.

Figure 10



Bi+ consumers pay attention to the inclusive signals put out on social media by different servicescapes. For example, bi+ consumers such as Minerva (28, woman, doctoral candidate), report seeing posts by Cornflower Bakery that state the servicescape's commitment to serving marginalized consumer groups in the local community. Minerva decodes these types of signals and understands that she, a consumer who has several marginalized identities, including bi+ and being both Black and white, is welcome in this space and may even enjoy being there. Minerva recalls how she first decoded these signals during a fundraiser for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU):

> [On Instagram] they're like, here's a fruitcake. You can have whatever pieces; anything you wanna donate's goin' to ACLU. Or they'll do stuff for—like February was like women's month, so they did all the proceeds went to help like female nonprofits. Or they do stuff to help stop deportation camps. And when like (name of state) flooded, they did a lot a collections for all the rural [Native American] tribes in (name of state) who had been flooded out. So they do cool stuff like that. And I think they're really big into like giving back to the community too. And so like that's something where like, I don't feel bad about spending money there. I mean I feel bad when I eat like 20 things and gain 50 pounds, but like I don't feel bad about my money going there. I'm happy it's going there.

For Minerva, Cornflower is the definition of an inclusive servicescape. When asked what it's like to be a bi+ consumer there, she said:

> It's a place you don't worry about coming or not coming out. I don't worry about if I'm with my partner and we're holding hands or whatever. It's just like *I don't worry about being human*, which is nice. You know. It's just—like I know the word "safe space" is very polar[izing]. But it is a nice safe space, where I know I' not gonna like—like maybe there might be some customers who are uncomfortable, but I know like if anything happened, the people who owned it would have my back.

As mentioned above in the consumer findings section, an inclusive servicescape or space of refuge is one where consumers who are bi+ can reveal their identity or they do not have to worry about the decision to conceal or reveal. The burden of that decision is lifted from their shoulders. At Cornflower Bakery, Minerva does not have to worry about staff or other patrons finding out that she is bi+, because the servicescape has sent sufficient signals of safety that she has been able to decode.

Challenges to Creating Inclusive Servicescapes

Making a servicescape inclusive is a goal that is met with various challenges. In this section, I use my data to analyze the main challenges and highlight service providers' recovery efforts when they perceive that major violations have occurred to their inclusive mission.

Hiring for Inclusion. Many service provider informants in my sample shared their desire to hire more diverse staff, which often meant more non-white staff, but on occasion meant visibly queer staff. This shared desire was often coupled with the

informant confiding their difficulty in finding or recruiting qualified individuals with these identities to work in their Midwestern city. Cynthia (owner, baker) shares her concern, “I do worry about having a very white staff. I would like the space to feel more racially diverse, but that truly is something I have very little control over based on who is applying.” Similarly, Marie (founder, psychological practice) shares her struggle:

> I am having a terrible time recruiting a psychologist of color to (name of city) to work with queer issues. And so that’s one thing that I really actually have been trying to be intentional about with recruiting for the other two positions. But there comes a, like a tipping point of, um— I do all that I’m supposed to do with like recruiting from diverse places—and I have to hire somebody at some point. I can only put off a hiring for so long before I’m turning clients away, and that’s not good for business either. So, like do I hire a white person? That part is really challenging and a place that I think we definitely need to grow—but it’s—it’s, it’s really hard to find people who are qualified and occupy those identity intersections.

Seeking diverse avenues to post job descriptions or recruit staff is a practice stated by many service provider informants. By posting in diverse neighborhoods, community centers, and digital platforms, service providers assure themselves that they have done their due diligence in seeking out diverse staff. However, constraints of time and volume of business often coerce providers into hiring staff that do not fit all of their requirements for hiring for diversity. Leah (owner, vegan restaurant) shares her belief that having a

diverse team can strengthen the work culture at Sweet Parsnip's as well as better reflect her inclusion efforts:

> So definitely with customers I want people to feel like welcome and invited, and, and whatnot. I think when it comes to hiring, I mean, I have an all-white staff. And that's—certainly an area of opportunity I think as a business owner, to be more mindful or cognizant of hiring for diversity, you know? 'Cause I think there is power in creating teams of people that are different from one another. And yes, we can all say, you know we're all alike, right, but we're not. You know people from different origins and, you know, grow up in different areas and have different viewpoints, I mean, all of that's power, right? So as I move forward in the lifespan of Sweet Parsnip's, like diversity and inclusion is definitely one of those things that I need to figure out how to infiltrate through every aspect of my business, because just my knee jerk reaction is I wanna make sure my customers feel that, you know? But I also wanna make sure my staff feel that and represent that as well.

For Leah, creating a diverse team is something that is still in the works; Leah is still brainstorming how she might accomplish this goal in her own business. Marie (founder, psychological practice) offers one approach to getting diverse candidates to apply, "Well, the position description is written saying this is who I'm looking for, and this is the work that you'll be doing, and these are the people that work best here." Marie communicates to potential applicants the nature of the work they will be doing. This includes the populations they will serve and ideal qualifications.

Nick, a very up-front owner of The Downtown Café, offers a similar perspective, laying out the inclusivity mission of the servicescape during the interview. This is his way of making sure the potential hire is onboard with the café's mission of inclusion. If not, they may self-select out of the hiring process. He says:

> Well the first thing I ask people when I interview them is—or I usually say "Look, here's the policy of The Downtown Café. We don't see color, we don't see race, we don't see sex, we don't see religion, we don't see gender; we see people, and we see their dollar bills. As long as those people are respectful to us, then we are respectful to them, period, that's it. If you can't handle that, I'm not gonna hire you—because I don't want people like that.

For Nick, "people like that" refers to people who do not respect the diversity of the customer base at The Downtown Café and may themselves violate the mission of inclusion within the servicescape. Nick chooses to send this strong signal in the interview so that those applicants who do not agree with his approach can self-select out of the rest of the hiring process by withdrawing their application. This also allows Nick to get a sense of the applicant's in the moment reaction to this policy and make a decision about whether the person would be a good fit for the culture in the café.

Service providers who seek to create and maintain inclusive servicescapes face the ongoing challenge of recruiting staff who demonstrate a "cultural fit" with the inclusive mission of the business (Rivera 2016). The difficulty in finding this kind of staff makes the training of employees for inclusivity all the more important.

Training for Inclusion. The type of training that a service provider offers sends a signal of how seriously the servicescape takes its commitment to inclusion. As discussed above, experiences of stigma run the gamut of verbal insults to full on physical and sexual assault. Staff must be appropriately trained to handle stigmatizing experiences whether they happen to customers, to themselves, or other staff members. Another important component to staff training is ensuring that all staff agree with and buy-in to the servicescape's mission to provide an inclusive space. If staff buy-in does not take place, then the servicescape is in a position to fail at providing an inclusive environment and may need to consider letting that staff member go.

A fairly ubiquitous finding among service provider informants is the necessity to have staff buy-in to the inclusive culture and to set up formal training and performance review processes to reinforce the culture. Chad (owner, gym) shares his approach which is quite similar to many customer service efforts in servicescapes:

> We have this thing called the 10-foot rule. So, if someone's within 10 feet of you, you're s'posed to say hello and their name. That's one thing. So, when we do coach reviews, one of their—the biggest piece of their review is their interaction with people in class, and they're at least twice supposed to use that person's name, and address them by name. And then they're s'posed to have at least 4 other interactions with them, whether that's like corrective feedback, like fixing a movement, or if it's reinforced feedback, letting the person know what they're doing well, or a social interaction. So those are different things that we have in place. And then establishing like

> our purpose statement and our core values, is all a part of that. And one of the pieces of our core values is connection, and one of those is learning every member's name. So, having those in place and repeating those with our staff has been really important to keep that goin'.

Chad and his team are trying to create and maintain an inclusive fitness servicescape that follows the CrossFit methodology. In previous work, CrossFit has been described as a tightly-knit community, almost cult-ish (Dawson 2017; Powers and Greenwell 2017). As a result, it can be difficult for new members to that space to feel included in the short run. By making the gym a space where "everyone knows your name," Chad hopes that both members and staff will feel included more quickly into the gym's community. Chad evaluates his staff based on how well they follow the 10-foot rule as well as guidelines for interactions during class times. This enables Chad to ensure the culture of inclusion is being maintained by all staff members.

Similarly, Marie (founder, psychological practice) provides opportunities for her staff to receive ongoing training to better serve diverse clients. As practicing psychologists, all of the providers at Interconnected Psychology must complete CEUs or Continuing Education Units to maintain their licensure. Marie has found a way to both support her staff and clients by paying for specific types of CEUs so that the cost does not come out of the individual pockets of her providers:

> I bought a membership with Affirmative Couch, which is owned by a friend of mine. He's a transman, who is a psychologist, and his business is providing accredited training, through webinar format for clinicians by clinicians, about the topics that we don't get much training in, and varying

> intersections thereof. So, there's one on polyamorous families who also are of this [specific] racial and ethnic demographic. Or, you know some sort of different intersections or different ways of thinking about it. And I as the owner of the business decided that I would pay for the CEU's for my staff if they chose to have them through Affirmative Couch. So kind of as one way to support development here and to make sure that everybody here is confident. Just as sort of that secondary layer of protection around right, like intentionally choosing people to work here. But also, then doing my part to make sure that… they stay up to date, you know?

Marie knows that she cannot provide all of the necessary training to her staff, and that in fact they are required to seek CEUs in different ways. However, Marie enables her staff to get the training they need in a way that supports their busy schedules and rewards them by paying for the CEUs herself. These CEUs give Marie's staff the experience they need to serve individuals with diverse and marginalized identities. However, occasionally, staff are hired and trained but still do not fully embody or promote the mission of providing an inclusive servicescape. When this happens, the service provider must make the decision to let the staff member go. As Marie puts it:

> I had originally thought about starting Kindred with another psychologist. And that— that was really before the identity [of the business] had solidified. And that, that was not a person who was a great fit here. In terms of… inclusion and having… a value system that she was… comfortable advocating for a position. So, she is no longer here. But I would say that that was one of the, the biggest obstacles—having to make

> sure that the people—who are here, really do support and communicate the identity and the vision in a way that's congruent with the identity, rather than just tolerating it.

Marie had to make the decision to let that staff member go in order to create the inclusive space she envisioned for Interconnected Psychology. Service provider informants share that staff hiring and training is the most common ongoing challenge they face. Many phrase this in terms of having the "right people" employed. As staff members move through the onboarding process, they often receive training about how to stand up to those who do not understand the nature of an inclusive servicescape. Often, this training involves instruction on how to turn away customers who violate those efforts. Cynthia (owner, bakery) explains:

> My staff is trained to know everyone is treated respectfully and the same as everyone else. We have a zero-tolerance policy for anyone being racist or homophobic in the store and my team is empowered and have the authority to ask customers to leave if they are not following those guidelines. We expect our customers to treat each other and my team as well as we treat them.

Indeed, service providers who seek to have an inclusive environment are willing to turn away not only potential applicants, current staff, but also customers.

Preparing for the Unknown. Even when service providers succeed in recruiting and training their staff for inclusivity, they continue to lack full control over how patrons and staff behave in their physical servicescape or on social media. Rachel (owner, brewery)

highlights the tension inherent in the lack of control service providers have over who enters their space and how those individuals choose to behave:

> I don't know how you know, [when] walking in that place, whether or not it's a safe place. Because maybe the place is safe, but maybe the person that walked in behind you is not safe. Right? So, we treat everybody the same, right? Everybody is equal, safe, welcome. But don't cross the line. You know? And everybody should think that way. Unfortunately, they don't. It's uncomfortable. It's awkward. It's hard. It's not an easy conversation to have. But it's important. So, I think especially, you know, when the person being attacked, or whatever the situation is that's happening, doesn't have that voice or can speak up for themselves. It's important for us to do that.

Rachel points to the importance of having a policy in place to stand up for someone who is feeling unsafe. Rachel's thoughts highlight the simple fact that, while staff may receive adequate training on how to interact with a customer who violates the servicescape's commitment to inclusion, other patrons do not, and she does not have control over what other patrons know and do in her servicescape. If staff see an interaction between patrons that they view as problematic towards their efforts of inclusion, the staff member may step in. Rachel highlights the core tension that exists for services providers who wish to provide an inclusive servicescape experience: the need to be prepared for the unknown, that which they have little control over. Specifically, the "unknown" service providers must prepare for and react to encompasses signals of

inclusion, patrons, and staff pertaining to the servicescape. I present data that illustrate each of these in turn.

Recovering an Inclusive Space. Service providers experience challenges to their inclusive servicescape through vandalism of inclusive signals in the servicescape. For example, fairly soon into their opening, Galactic Cluster Brewery (GCB) faced a challenge to their mission to provide an inclusive servicescape, in the form of patrons defacing their signal of inclusion: we welcome everybody sign (Figure 4). This challenge happened again resulting in what the owners perceived to be a violation of their inclusive servicescape. Rachel, who owns GCB with her husband, describes the initial incident:

> And probably two months [in], the men's bathroom one was defaced, like pretty immediately. But they wrote on the very bottom of it. So they didn't write on the sign they wrote sort of in the white space. And then some other customer, I don't know who, marked it out with a sharpie. And so that happened really early [on]. It didn't say anything really derogatory towards the people that we're talking about on the sign. But so it said, "Fuck this." That's what it said that somebody wrote on the bottom, and then somebody scratched it out. And so I was like, Man, that sucks. You know, like, cuz you could still sort of see it. And it's like, somebody wrote it with a pen. And so it's like, it's not completely gone. Right? Um, so I was like, that's not great. And I don't love that that happened here. And but somebody took care of it, which I sort of was like, that was good, too,

> because it was another customer. Like, it wasn't us that noticed it right away. It was some other person that was here that scratched it out.

Rachel notes that this challenge to the inclusive environment at GCB was met by another patron who disagreed with the person who defaced the sign. While Rachel and her husband were initially pleased that a fellow patron "handled" the situation, it still left them worried that something like that happened in the first place at GCB. Rachel replaced the defaced sign and about a month later, it was defaced again. In recalling the incident:

> [The signs] say, "we welcome everyone," basically and it has a list of [who that includes], you can read them as you go to the bathroom. But somebody just wrote something really negative on it. They said, "except Jews and fags," is what they wrote on our sign. We felt that was very inappropriate and just something that we don't tolerate here.

Later, Rachel says:

> And just like the initial reaction, for me, cuz it was in the men's bathroom. So the initial reaction for me was like, just how long has it been like that? Who has seen it? How did it make these people feel? Like, this is emotional. And so it was immediately like, Oh, God, like I felt terrible that I didn't know that it happened. I don't know how long it had been like that. And so that was my initial sort of reaction to it. And [my husband's] initial reaction to it was "fuck this" basically.

At GCB, the bathroom or the location of the inclusive signal, became a battleground for patrons to challenge and ultimately violate GCB's mission of providing an inclusive

environment. Rachel and her husband's concerns centered around the fact that other patrons may have seen the sign and been negatively affected by it. After this violation, the owners of GCB went almost immediately into recovery mode, effectively getting ahead of the story. The first move was to post the defaced sign on social media and state that this type of behavior is not tolerated in their servicescape.

Figure 11

What emerged online was a coalescing of the community around GCB. Patrons and other service providers posted in support of GCB and their stance and joined in "calling out" the person(s) responsible. Many owners of servicescapes also commented on the post that they wanted to hang inclusive signs in their spaces as well. Thus, the second step was to order new signs to be printed to hang in GCB and to hand out to other servicescapes. Rachel and her husband decided to place the signs on the outside of the bathroom door, facing into the taproom, rather than inside the bathrooms, that way they would be harder to deface without being detected. The third step was to host an event about how to be an ally with two non-profit organizations that represent the groups targeted in the defacing of the signs, a local LGBTQ+ organization and a local Jewish temple. In Rachel's words, this allowed GCB to address the issue in a productive way, bring the community together, and collectively learn what it means to be an ally to different groups of people. Rachel says:

> And so I think it was just important just to keep sort of calling attention to it a bit not just have it be like, "Oh, we have a sign. And we're going to replace it." It was like, "Hey, we have a sign and it got defaced and that was messed up. And we're going to take care of that." But also like, by the way, "We really truly believe this." And I think it's important to talk about it. And to make some change. So that's kind of how all of that went down.

Many bi+ consumer informants shared that GCB is an example of an inclusive servicescape, a place of refuge, for them. Many of them were not even aware that a violation of the inclusive space occurred. In their recovery efforts, it's possible that GCB clearly communicated and solidified their positioning as an inclusive servicescape.

Another way that a sense of inclusion is challenged in servicescapes, is through the behavior of patrons, either against other patrons or staff members. Just as the example from GCB demonstrates, not all interactions take place in front of staff, which may make recovery efforts difficult for the service provider. Monica (barista, café) shares the painful reality that patrons would often choose their moments to enact stigma carefully, so as to not be overheard by others:

> I definitely dealt with lots of customers who—like to push the boundaries. Especially in like private moments when they feel like they won't have a consequence. So if you're a service employee oftentimes you'll have a customer—if you're a service employee who's trans, oftentimes you'll have a customer who will deliberately misgender you, you know, or say something shitty to you. Kinda tryin' to goad you into a reaction. I've had that type of situation happen a lot.

Monica notes how this type of behavior, coupled with the everyday stigma that trans individuals face, wears on a person and has adverse consequence to their well-being. This clear challenge to Monica being included in the servicescape has the result of causing considerable stress and resentment among staff with stigmatized identities. In Monica's case, the constant stigma and associated deterioration on her well-being amounted to an outburst at a patron of the inclusive servicescape, and Monica's dismissal. In this case, staff and patrons of Rouse Coffee and Espresso were alarmed to hear one of the employees of the café, Monica, shouting at a patron that she was "bigoted trash" and to "leave and never come back." Adding one layer to this interaction, is the fact that Monica,

the employee, is a transwoman who has worked and volunteered to advance the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals in her community. The customer, on the other hand, works for a conservative lobbying group that seeks to maintain and even pull back rights offered to LGBTQ+ individuals (i.e. taking away the right to marry). Monica was well aware of who the customer was and who she worked for, but it is unclear whether the customer knew of Monica's identity and experience. Adding another layer, is the fact that Rouse purports to be an inclusive servicescape with the majority of their staff being LGBTQ+. Adding yet another layer, is the fact that the café is within walking distance of a state capitol, and seeks to make everyone feel included, regardless of their political beliefs.

Within 30 minutes, Monica had received a call from the owners letting her know that she was terminated. Depending on how this story gets told, Rouse's decision may seem to be in line with their mission to offer an inclusive servicescape, and at times to violate this mission. As Monica tells it:

> [Rouse] did something that on its face looks not particularly inclusive, right? Firing me for what I did, that doesn't appear inclusive on its face. But, firing me for what I did was best for the safety of their majority LGBTQ employees, right? And it was best for the business to make sure that those employees continued receiving a paycheck, and continued having employment. Right? And those things are less obvious on the face. But that's the balancing act, right? That's how it works.

Monica notes that if one looks at the situation at face-value, that person may be led to believe that Rouse is not an inclusive place, because a trans employee was fired for

sticking up for their community, members of which Rouse employees. Important to note is that Rouse did have a policy whereby an employee could and should ask a patron to leave if they were being "rude" to any of the staff or patrons. The issue in this case is that the patron was not being "rude" while she was in the servicescape, and so Monica's behavior appeared out of context to many unfamiliar with the nature of their previous work histories.

Many bi+ consumer informants were aware of this violation of the inclusive space at Rouse and either had decided to avoid that servicescape or had feelings of uncertainty which led to avoidance. For example, when asked if there are places they avoid going, Kay (26, non-binary, nurse) responded with, "Oh, I don't go to Rouse anymore. That's a thing. But yeah, that's not like my personal experience. That's how they've treated others in the queer community." Like Kay, many informants were aware of the story from other members of the LGBTQ+ community, but also because it made national news. However, not all bi+ consumer informants shared Kay's clarity in making the decision to avoid Rouse in the future.

Trevor (38, man, graduate teaching assistant) shares their uncertainty around the incident:

> So I actually don't know how to feel about this; 'cause I used to go, I, I live like—sort of across the street from Rouse Coffee, and I used to go there. I've been—pointedly not going there lately because there was a story. Apparently, um, there was sort of an incident where a trans woman who worked there; uh, did you hear about this? [**Yeah.]** Oh, okay. Um, she was fired for—um—refusing service to, uh, someone she had recognized

> as like a—a socially conservative activist. And—um—kinda made a scene I guess. At least, from a story that I read. And she was fired. And, uh, it was this whole thing.

From hearing Trevor's take on the "whole thing" one thing is clear: Trevor is not sure how to feel or how to move forward with this servicescape, so they have decided to avoid it for the time being. Prior to this incident, Trevor used to meet friends, and even the bi+ social group on several occasions, just to hang out and get to know one another. Trevor recalls:

> I mean it's a place where I've gone on dates, it's a place where I've had initial meetings with people who became good friends, and so it's a place where I've had some of those like self-disclosing conversations.

Rouse had been a space of refuge, one where Trevor and friends could be themselves without fear of judgement. As a bi+ consumer, Trevor has gone on dates with individuals of different genders and felt comfortable doing so at Rouse.

Since the initial incident between Monica and "the customer," fellow patrons, at worst, view Rouse as an unsafe place, and at best, are unsure of the safety of the space. According to Monica (barista, café), remaining staff are also fairly divided on how they feel about Rouse's decision and the current nature of the servicescape:

> I know that there are a handful of employees who really, really disagree with what I did. Most of them understand what I did. Most of them think that I should still be employed. That's their personal opinion. And I know that, you know, they had to unplug the phone for a couple of weeks. They were gettin' a whole bunch a shitty phone calls and shitty emails, and

> shitty reviews online. And the majority of the staff is in the LGBT umbrella, and a majority of the staff suffers from some sort of mental illness… And I know that it was definitely really hard for a lot of them in those couple of weeks immediately after. I know that there was a lot of stress about being in that workplace because of what I had done, and I have a lot of guilt over that, because they had to deal with that type of stuff because of what I did. And none of them asked for that. I do know that (the) company is sensitive to those things though. They did, they did allow them to unplug the phone. Just did it. Unplugged it from the wall, and they didn't take any calls for a couple a weeks. And you know, that included calls that were coming in that were not in any way antagonistic. It was people who were just wanting to know when we were open, and what was on the menu and that kind a stuff. The owners know who their employees are and the mangers know who their employees are and they are very concerned with making sure that the workplace is a safe and inclusive place. And they wanna make sure that their employees feel comfortable coming to work.

From Monica's point of view, Rouse has taken measures to make sure that their staff feel that Rouse is once again an inclusive servicescape. By allowing employees to unplug the phone, the owners and managers were willing to lose out on potential sales in order to protect the mental and emotional well-being of their staff. Based on the consumer data in this study, Rouse has not effectively communicated the steps they have taken at recovering their space as inclusive to the wider public, including former patrons. Rouse

has been able to recover their relationship with Monica, something that has likely served them well given the national exposure Monica received when the story initially hit. Rouse became a target for socially conservative groups, including the infamous Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) who planned to protest in front of Rouse. Out of concern for their employees, Rouse asked Monica to plan a counter-protest to fill the front window of the café with members of the LGBTQ+ community and block the WBC from view of workers and patrons. When asked how this came about, Monica says, "Rouse is the one who let me know that Westboro Baptist was coming. And Rouse was the one who asked me to do something. And this is what I came up with." When asked why, she says, "Those people are my friends." On the morning of the protest and counter-protest, the staff at Rouse decorated the space to be "gay" meaning in rainbow colors. From my fieldnotes:

> As Monica had mentioned at the counter-protest organizing meeting, the interior of Rouse had been decorated to be a "gay space" for the occasion. There were decorative balls of tissue paper hanging from the ceiling in different colors of the rainbow. Several of the protest signs were also hung in the front window facing the street. There were also strings of mini-flags hanging across the counter – each with a flag of a different rainbow color. The space was very busy and full of people. There were twinkling lights that gave off a festive holiday feel but also a sort of dance party feel as they pulsated and changed shapes across the interior of the space. On my way out, I saw some pinwheels in flower pots that had bi-pride colors and looked like flowers.

While Rouse has taken steps to recover their space as inclusive, their success has not been clear to all stakeholders. As it stands, it seems that patrons view Rouse has not having done recovery efforts to fulfill their commitment to providing an inclusive space. Trevor (38, man, graduate teaching assistant) says, “it is kind of generally known that a lot a people working there are various flavors of queer. And, maybe having some kind of meeting, like, “Let’s take the temperature here, how does everyone feel?” Trevor offers just one example of the type of communication effort Rouse could take part in to get a sense of how the LGBTQ+ community is feeling in light of the recent incident and then make a plan for how to move forward. As it stands, Rouse has not been completely successful in recovering their inclusive service environment following a violation.

It is therefore necessary for inclusive servicescapes to have a way for dealing with the challenges posed by patrons, especially when those challenging behaviors are targeted towards staff and other providers in the servicescape. Monica’s experiences highlight the importance of inclusive servicescapes to extend to staff as well as customers, and the obligation of the servicescape in protecting all parties involved in a less than ideal interaction. Typically, these interactions end with one or more parties being asked to leave. In being asked to leave, patrons may be asked not to return again, depending on the policy of the servicescape. For example, Rachel (owner) states that while Galactic Cluster Brewery has not had any interactions that challenge the inclusive space, she has had to ask a patron to leave for being lewd towards a staff member. Due to the servicescape’s commitment to inclusion, service providers feel empowered to take

a stand and protect staff and other patrons. When asked about whether the brewery has had such interactions, Rachel shares:

> No, um, there hasn't been. Um, but I think it's pretty, like, we make it pretty clear, I think, just sort of who we are, what our space is about. And, you know, we don't just, we don't stand for it. So, I think we've shown it more probably in our actions than having to have a sit down conversation with anybody ever. So, there's been nothing here that's been like, you know, racial issue or sexuality issue, none of that has happened in terms of our customers, and our bartenders, and whatever. We did have a very old man passing gross, weird notes to a bartender one day, so that was crossing a bit of a line. And so, I stopped that immediately. And so, I think just like some of those kinds of incidents that have happened, I think they see that, you know, the proof is in the pudding. And we mean what we say, when we say you're safe here.

By taking a stand when a patron is making a staff member or fellow patron feel unsafe, service providers demonstrate the inclusive environment they work so hard to create and maintain. Staff spend considerably more time in the servicescape than customers, and service providers who seek to offer inclusive servicescapes take staff inclusion seriously.

A final challenge that service providers face in seeking to create and maintain an inclusive servicescape pertains to patron-patron interactions. In these instances, service providers often find themselves in the position of making a difficult decision in order to maintain or recover an inclusive servicescape. For example, Nick (owner, café) shares

several stories of times when he's asked patrons to leave based on their interactions with other patrons. As Nick sees it, any patron is allowed to have their own ideas and opinions, but when they verbalize something that interferes with another person's sense of safety, that patron must leave. He says:

> So, in the confines of our store, when I see somebody feeling you know threatened by a customer, or I hear, overhear—like one day I overheard some guys makin' lesbian jokes, and I was like "Get out." And they were like "You can't kick us out." And like, "Yeah, first of all, I have people come in my store and share that they have, same-sex lovers. And I have employees that they do." And that's not cool. So, to me that's what safe means. No threats and no fear of going to work and having to like defend yourself, or feel like you're less than or inferior to somebody else.

Nick goes on to complete his retelling of the interaction, which involved some back and forth with the patrons he kicked out:

> They're like, you know, "Look, this is a free country, we can, you know, freedom of speech." And I was like, "Well that's, you know, true outside of someone's business." But at the same time, even if I didn't have gay employees, or, you know whatever, I still would have said, "That's not cool. You know like don't, don't say that kind a stuff in my shop. I'm not okay with that."

A takeaway from Nick's experiences for other service providers is to know one's rights as a business owner and to try and explain them to challenging patrons. While service providers and staff in inclusive servicescapes may have limited control over what

patrons do in their space, they can make sure they are adequately informed of their rights and responsibilities as an owner and operator of an inclusive servicescape.

Similarly, Chad (owner, gym) had to make the difficult decision, along with others on Midwest CrossFit's leadership team, to ask several long-standing members of their gym to leave. Over the course of several years, Midwest CrossFit noticed a deterioration in the culture at their gym, a servicescape that purported to be an inclusive space for patrons and staff. Mainly, this took the form of reports from members that other members were taking part in bullying behaviors, such as making derogatory remarks about marginalized groups. Chad, the owner, describes the behavior:

> I'll just say it was derogatory towards women, some of the verbiage that was happening back there. There were situations where people were feeling bullied, like they weren't welcome. I'm saying back there, and I mean the icebox [backroom], um, where they were feeling bullied because of political stances and just derogatory comments, about like sexual orientation and stuff like that. Those are like the type of things that were happening back there. And there was a lot of situations where they weren't necessarily directed at one person, but the culture was different from what we're establishing overall. And it was something that wasn't acceptable. And then there were examples of people coming to us not feeling comfortable about being able to work out back there because of the culture that was being set up.

In the case of Midwest CrossFit, a subgroup of members started to create their own culture in the backroom of the gym, fondly named the "icebox." The icebox is a space

where all members are supposed to be able to come before or after class to do extra work, such as weightlifting, cardio, or stretching. However, the subgroup that came to occupy the icebox for many hours at a time every day the gym was open, created a subculture that was not the same as the overall gym and violated the promise of an inclusive servicescape. As Chad puts it:

> Anyone should be able to go back there and feel comfortable, like they're not gonna be offended by the verbiage that's being used back there, or feel uncomfortable or triggered by, you know anything. So those situations just started to become more and more frequent, and common, and that was definitely not the direction that we wanted to go with the gym overall.

Chad reports that discussions among the staff about what to do started a couple of years ago, but at that time the gym lacked a clear mission statement. Today, the gym has a more defined set of core values so the staff decided to revisit the issue:

> And we, decided as a group that in the long term vision of creating a community that is like positive and inclusive, that the things that were happening could no longer happen in our gym, because whatever we allow, we're basically saying is okay to happen, and we decided that those members needed to leave. However, we decided there needed to be conversations with them first. That we weren't just gonna be like—go. And so, when we were noticing more negativity and bullying and stuff happening, we started bringing them [the perpetrators] into the office and discussing with them like some things that were not okay and [things that were] okay to do in the gym. And so when those discussions were had,

> and then the issued continued, that was when we decided it was time just to ask them to move forward.

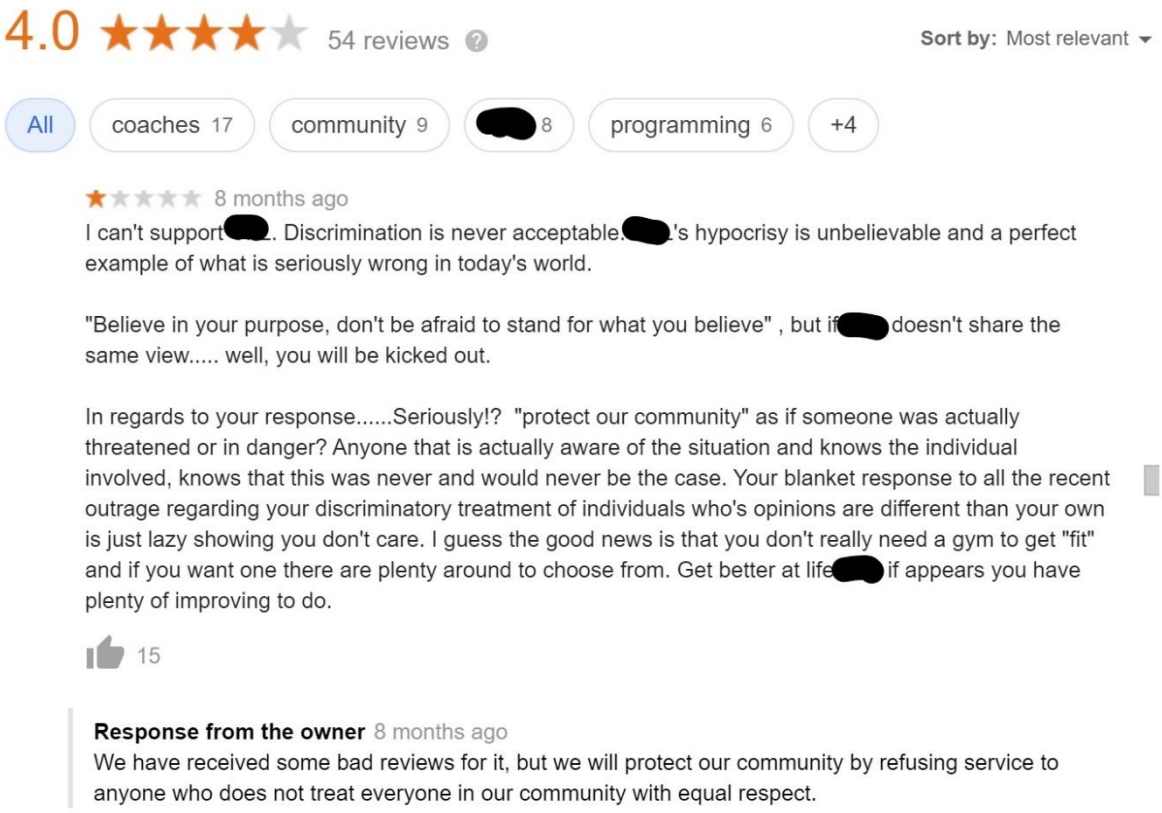
By asking "them to move forward," Chad means asking those members to leave the gym and find a new fitness servicescape. In efforts to recover Midwest CrossFit as an inclusive space for everyone, including the subgroup of members who regularly worked out in the icebox, Chad took part in individual discussions about the importance of having an inclusive space. During these discussions, it became clear to Chad that some members of the subgroup were willing to change their behavior and adhere to the gym's overall culture, and others were not. Chad says:

> I mean by creating the place that you want everyone to feel welcome, you also don't want people to feel like they're not welcome at the same time. So like reviewing where you wanna go and having those discussions with those people first about what kind of culture we're tryin' to create was key for us. And that was really the deciding factor whether that they were in or out on that same vision that we have, so.

Though Chad gave some members the opportunity to stay, others were simply asked to leave. This resulted in challenges to Midwest CrossFit over social media, email, and Google reviews of their business. Several members who were asked to leave reached out to local and national friends who also are members of the global CrossFit community and recruited them to write negative posts, emails, and reviews, even if they had no previous knowledge of or contact with Midwest CrossFit. Often these posts, emails, and reviews, stated that Midwest CrossFit was not an inclusive space, because members had been kicked out for their beliefs. This negative publicity posed a secondary challenge to

Midwest CrossFit, yet gave them an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to their core values and current member and coach community.

Figure 12



Throughout this process, Chad, and the rest of the staff at Midwest CrossFit learned that part of creating an inclusive servicescape means thinking about how the space is set up and what types of interactions take place in that space. For example, Chad realized that the icebox, previously intended to be an accessory space to the primary room where classes took place, was becoming a primary destination for some members, which led them to create an exclusive group and culture. Chad says:

> We do notice that like if folks tend to not do classes, and they go into another room and workout, that they're not as connected to the class, and they seem excluded. I [mean] we feel that they feel exclude, so that doesn't mean that they maybe feel excluded, but we possibly feel like they might feel that way. (Laughs) So, I don't know if that made any sense at all.

The exclusive group may not feel excluded from the overall culture of the gym, but there is a universal perception among the other members and coaches that they are self-excluding from the rest of the gym. Though Midwest CrossFit has faced ongoing challenges and major violations to their mission to offer a safe servicescape, the gym has also had its fair share of successes. Chad recalls that he sees the gym being successful when he can see diversity among members:

> It was cool because we, at one point we had an NFL player like working out next to a woman that was 60 years old. And so, to see that dynamic together in one spot was somethin' that we never experienced in any other gym setting. So, like we were doing essentially the same prescription for a workout, but the 60 year old's was a little bit different than what the NFL player was doing—and I just feel like every class has such a wide range of backgrounds and it's (that way) almost all the time. There are some classes that have their [own] personalities, where there's maybe some more likeminded people, like in a class. But overall, it seems like almost every class has different backgrounds and perspectives and, [members

> who] see through different lenses, and, athletic abilities and sizes and—it's just really cool.

Despite facing a violation to their inclusive servicescape, Midwest CrossFit was able to take part in recovery aspects to regain the trust of their patrons and staff and continue to offer an inclusive environment. Chad found himself in the difficult position of having to make a ruling over what type of behavior is and is not acceptable at Midwest CrossFit. Similar to service providers who have experienced challenges between staff and patrons, as well as to signals in their servicescape, Chad made the decision to ask individuals to leave in order to recover a sense of inclusion.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This dissertation has two interrelated objectives to understanding understudied consumer and service provider perspectives. The first objective is to gain an understanding of how consumers with concealable stigmatized identities participate in servicescapes and balance their consumption-related and well-being needs. I chose to study bi+ consumers because they make up a rich context to explore and understand identity concealability, as they must make this decision in a wide variety of servicescapes. I show that bi+ consumers must regularly make the heavy decision of whether to conceal or reveal their stigmatized identity. In doing so, I conceptualize practices of concealing and revealing in which bi+ consumers take part. Bi+ consumers take part in individual concealment practices of partially withdrawing from the marketplace and camouflaging their identity to either pass as a less stigmatized identity or to go undetected in market spaces. Bi+ consumers utilize practices of revealing at the individual and the collective level. At the individual level, bi+ consumers practice narrowcasting (revealing to a small audience), broadcasting (revealing to a large audience), and downplaying (minimizing the importance of their bi+ identity in light of the many other dimensions of their personhood). At the collective level, bi+ consumers reveal their stigmatized identity as part of a bi+ social group. While under the protection of the group, bi+ consumers co-create safer spaces within existing servicescapes and to map existing servicescapes that offer them a sense of refuge.

The second objective of this dissertation is to better understand how and why service providers create and maintain inclusive servicescapes, and what they do when they face challenges to doing so. I find that service providers utilize their own personal views and

knowledge of unmet marketing needs when making the decision to offer an inclusive servicescape. In order to understand how service providers implement inclusion in their servicescape, I deconstruct the concept of an "inclusive vibe." I find that when creating an inclusive vibe, service providers consider and alter spatial elements of the physical servicescape such as the amenities they offer, signal their inclusive intent through point of sale communications and interactions as well as through external communications such as their social media presence. Service providers often face challenges in creating and maintaining an inclusive servicescape. Whether service providers manage these challenges appropriately in the eyes of their customer base has direct implications for restoring trust among their constituents that an inclusive vibe has been recovered. Service providers often face the challenges of hiring for diversity, training for inclusion, preparing for the unknown and unexpected, and recovering a sense of inclusion.

Having recapped the two objectives of this dissertation, I now discuss its contributions to marketing theory, practice, and policy.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

First, this dissertation contributes to marketing research on stigma by highlighting the experiences of consumers with a hidden or concealable stigma. As noted, the literature on consumer stigma mainly focuses on how consumers cope with its unconcealable forms, or those that are readily apparent (Baker 2006; Bone et al. 2014; Crockett 2017; Crockett and Wallendorf 2004; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Previous work on concealable stigmatized identities regards such identities as those that must be concealed in order to meet consumption needs (Adkins and Ozanne 2005) or identities tied to specific and

discreet ritual practices (Weinberger 2015). This dissertation expands this previous work by conceptualizing everyday consumer practices of concealing and revealing. The dissertation shows that consumers with concealable stigmatized identities constantly make the decision to approach or avoid servicescapes, choose whether to conceal or reveal their identity, and decide how to go about doing so in order to prevent a stigmatizing experience.

On the one hand, consumers with concealable stigmatized identities may hide their identity by partially withdrawing from market spaces or blending into the service environment, as when they pass as someone with an identity that has a higher social value, such as straight or even gay/lesbian. Interestingly, both types of concealment practices take an emotional toll on consumers, may prevent them from getting their consumption needs met, and may negatively impact their well-being. Furthermore, concealment practices keep key aspects of the consumer hidden, which poses a significant challenge for service providers who want to serve them. Yet, concealment practices are important for consumers to maintain some level of control and safety in unsafe or uncertain servicescapes.

On the other hand, consumers with concealable stigmatized identities reveal their identity in myriad ways, including individually and collectively. Individually, they reveal their identity by carefully narrowcasting their signal to a small group of likely allies, broadcasting their signal to a wide audience, and by downplaying the importance of their stigmatized identity to the rest of their self. Collectively, consumers participate in a social group to feel a sense of protection while meeting their consumption needs. As a member

of this collective, consumers work together to co-create safer spaces in servicescapes and map servicescapes that offer a sense of refuge.

The complex nature of concealable stigmatized identities, and the experiences of consumers who possess them, are relatively unexplored in research on consumers and services. While bi+ consumers make up a rich and theoretically interesting sample for study, the range of servicescapes allow for some generalizability of findings to the experiences of consumers with other concealable stigmatized identities. According to the Centers for Disease Control (2018), almost half of all American adults have a chronic illness that is considered a concealable stigmatized identity. These identities may include severe food allergies or diseases such as celiac disease and diabetes, illnesses such as HIV/AIDS or heart disease, and disabilities such as cystic fibrosis, learning disabilities, and even mental illness. Concealable stigmatized identities have no visible indicators, thus placing a burden on the consumer to conceal or reveal, and the service provider to appropriately meet the needs of the consumer. Conceptually, the marketing literature has offered important expansions to our understanding of stigma, yet these overwhelmingly focus on unconcealable or visible stigmatized identities.

Second, this dissertation contributes to the literature on services by investigating how servicescapes contribute to consumer well-being from both the consumer and service provider perspectives. Through participant observation and in-depth interviews with both consumers as well as service providers, I show how consumers experience a sense of refuge when they are able to reveal their stigmatized identity (and be accepted), and how service providers can create and maintain inclusive servicescapes. The current project contributes to the literature on Transformative Services Research (TSR), and recent calls

to examine the role of services in enhancing consumer well-being (Anderson et al. 2013; Fisk et al. 2018; Ostrom et al. 2015). The current project enhances our understanding of how servicescapes impact consumer well-being, such as through their inclusive design, staffing decisions, and the ways in which they address challenges to their inclusive space. Much of the research on servicescapes considers provider-consumer interactions outside of social inequality. However, this dissertation takes a sociological perspective to the social dynamics that shape the service experience. In line with recent calls in the literature, it does appear that service providers want to alleviate consumers' experiences of stigma, at least in their servicescape (Fisk et al. 2018). Thus, the current project examines and revises the traditional servicescapes framework in line with the nature of transformative services research.

Third, this dissertation problematizes the notions of third places and safe spaces, by illuminating exactly why these spaces are so important for consumers with concealable stigmatized identities. Third places offer a sense of community and connection, a need that may be even more important to well-being for consumers who regularly experience stigma. When consumers with stigmatized identities experience acceptance in third places and safe spaces, it can have dramatic impacts on their short-term and long-term well-being. Previously in the marketing literature, attention has been given to how third places achieve both a global and local feel (Thompson and Arsel 2004), how consumers form attachments to third places (Debenedetti et al. 2013), and the functions that third places serve (Rosenbaum et al. 2007). Yet, little attention has been granted to the intersection of stigma and third places. The current dissertation examines this space and finds that third spaces offer consumers with concealable stigmatized identities a refuge

from the drama of their everyday lives. For many informants in the study, home was not even considered such a space, yet inclusive servicescapes served as third places and spaces of refuge. If anything, the current dissertation problematizes previous literature on why third places exist and why they are so important to consumers. Additionally, the current dissertation engages with the notion of safe spaces, a term not yet taken up by the marketing literature.

MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

By investigating a diverse array of servicescapes, this dissertation deconstructs how consumers come to perceive a servicescape as inclusive or "safe." This perception relies on spatial elements such as 1) physical layout including accessibility of space, purpose of space, and amenities such as all-gender bathrooms, 2) point of sale communications such as safe space signals, 3) point of sale interactions such as affirming customer-provider interactions, and 4) external communications such as social media posts with inclusive language or publicizing the business' support of diverse causes and groups.

I use this understanding as a steppingstone to offer some guidance to servicescape managers that wish to create and maintain a more inclusive service experience. In particular, I present an ideal service blueprint for managers to use as a tool for creating an inclusive environment by way of identifying and transforming areas of the service environment and encounter that may violate their mission of inclusion (Exhibit 1). As shown in Exhibit 1, there are five parts or layers to a service blueprint: physical evidence, customer actions, onstage or visible contact employee actions, backstage or invisible contact employee actions, and support processes (Bitner et al. 2008). Here I reflect on

findings in this dissertation to illuminate how each component of the blueprint can be utilized by managers and providers to create an inclusive environment and experience.

First, in terms of physical evidence, service providers shared the ways they communicate inclusion through safe space signs in the windows of their establishment, using inclusive language and highlighting diverse community efforts on their website and social media, allowing employees to express their diverse concealable identities, having an accessible entrance as well as layout, and providing all-gender bathrooms. Service providers who wish to offer an inclusive environment can and should think through the type of physical evidence present in their servicescape and what type of message it sends regarding inclusion. For consumers with concealable stigmatized identities who valorize the ability of revealing their identity, these types of physical evidence can be crucial to them feeling comfortable doing so.

Second, service providers discussed the types of actions customers take as part of the service delivery process in their inclusive servicescapes (Bitner et al. 2008). These actions include contacting the establishment in some way, entering the servicescape, making a purchase, engaging in a secondary activity such as a community event or performance, and staying present in the servicescape for a period of time. Each time a current or potential customer takes one of these actions, they have the opportunity to learn something about the servicescape and themselves (Bitner et al. 2008). For example, consumers may find a new favorite dish that meets their dietary restrictions or see a safe space signal that encourages them to return to the servicescape and spend time there. Importantly, these actions lead up to the consumer-provider interaction. Consumers with

concealable stigmatized identities make the decision of whether and how to conceal or reveal their identity as they take part in these actions.

Third, on the other side of the "line of interaction," onstage or visible contact employee actions make up face-to-face interactions between customers and providers. These actions for inclusive servicescapes include greeting the customer by their name (which requires remembering their name), being affirming of their identity during the service encounter (using their preferred name and/or pronouns, being mindful of food allergies), and engaging in conversation about inclusion in the space. To succeed in this layer of the service delivery process, providers must consider their staff hiring and training processes and have an institutionalized process for review.

Fourth, on the other side of the "line of visibility," backstage or invisible contact employee actions take place which are all points of contact that are not face-to-face. These include online interactions on social media, blogs, or review sites, online or phone contact that involves an interaction, and the work of preparing the customer's order or the setting in which the service will take place (such as a doctor's office). Invisible contact is still contact, and providers must continue to be mindful of diverse consumer experiences even when they cannot see the person with which they are interacting. In this way, these activities may mirror face-to-face interactions that providers have with consumers with concealable stigmatized identities. The challenge is providing an ideal service experience without necessary information about the customer.

Fifth, on the other side of the "line of internal interaction," are support processes or those that take place outside of the actual service encounter but enable it to take place. In this dissertation, service providers share thoughtful and inclusive support processes

including order or scheduling software that includes preferred names and pronouns, hiring and training processes to promote inclusion in the encounter and space, working with other inclusive service providers to acquire inclusive signals (physical evidence), and working with diverse suppliers and community partners. Managers and providers can and should use the provided ideal blueprint to identify areas where they are succeeding at providing an inclusive service experience, and areas where they are struggling to achieve their mission.

In addition to providing a blueprint for creating an inclusive servicescape, this dissertation provides guidance around how service providers can go about the task of maintaining their inclusive servicescape. I provide examples of ongoing challenges service providers face, failures of service providers to create an inclusive space, and ways service providers may recover their inclusive space. Ongoing challenges that service providers face typically center on hiring and training staff who buy-in to the inclusive mission, but also include a sense of a lack of control over what patrons may do in the servicescape, particularly when they interact with other patrons or with staff. Importantly, service providers again must prepare for the unknown, as it may take the form of a challenge to their mission of inclusion. Service providers fail to provide an inclusive servicescape when a major challenge to that inclusive space occurs. As is evident in both the consumer and service provider findings, trust is incredibly important for consumers with stigmatized identities. Moreover, those who wish to offer such consumers with an inclusive experience must do their best to maintain their inclusive space at all costs or recover that sense of inclusion if it is challenged. If service providers fail to recover their inclusive space, consumers will likely avoid that servicescape in the future and take part

in negative word-of-mouth (as seen in the Rouse Coffee and Espresso example). In this dissertation, I provide examples in which such a challenge occurred and document the extent to which each servicescape was successful in recovering their inclusive space. These detailed failure and recovery efforts may act as miniature case studies for service providers to learn from before they implement their own inclusive design. Providers can recover their inclusive space by reaching out to their customers and staff who were affected by the challenge to their mission, holding events to bring the community together, and turning away the offending parties from current or further business. Given that the process of offering an inclusive servicescape is nascent territory, each of these points represent substantial contributions to the practice of marketing, as new and seasoned providers of inclusive servicescapes can each take something away from these challenges and recovery efforts.

PUBLIC POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS

In this dissertation I bring forth three fruitful areas for public policymakers to consider. First, public policymakers must consider the impact of deceptive advertising on consumers with concealable stigmatized identities. This topic is worthy of consideration for several reasons. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has jurisdiction over most products and services, including deceptive advertising which refers specifically to advertising that is fraudulent, deceptive, or misleading (2001). The FTC, in their Deceptive Policy Statement (2001), focuses on the nature of information presented in an advertisement that is intended to mislead the consumer (Nagar 2010). However, the

ability of the FTC to investigate deceptive advertising claims has been significantly curtailed by Congress (H.R.2313, 96th Cong.). It is necessary that researchers and policymakers expand their understanding of deceptive advertising to services and their environments. In the case of gay bars, for example, policymakers should consider how advertising an establishment as a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community impacts individuals who are further stigmatized within that community. As demonstrated in this dissertation, bi+ consumer informants report verbal, physical, and sexual assault in these servicescapes that advertise themselves as "safe spaces" for bi+ consumers. This type of marketing has implications for consumers who may find themselves walking into what feels like a trap. The current dissertation raises awareness of the impact of deceptive marketing of "safe spaces" such as gay bars to members of an already stigmatized group. Such awareness is needed in order to lead to policy change on a large scale. However, given the status of Congress pertaining to the FTC's role, there currently exists a vacuum for dealing with deceptive advertising of services such as "safe spaces."

Second, this dissertation contributes to the mounting evidence for the need of customer anti-discrimination laws. Such laws not only protect consumers but are instructive for service providers and business owners. Based on the data presented, I suggest that Congress pass the Equality Act. This act has been introduced in both the House of Representatives and the Senate since 2015, yet has never made it through committee and subcommittee discussions. Recently, the Equality Act was again introduced in the Senate on March 13, 2019 (S. 788, 116th Cong.) and the House on May 10, 2019 (H. R. 5, 116th Cong.). On May 17, 2019, the House voted and passed the Equality Act. Next, the bill would need to make it through a Republican majority Senate

in order to become federal law. The purpose of the Equality Act is "to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and for other purposes" (S. 788, 116th Cong. 2019). The Equality Act is necessarily quite expansive, incorporating virtually all aspects of life. Specific to stigmatized consumers, the bill states that:

> LGBTQ people commonly experience discrimination in securing access to public accommodations – including restaurants, senior centers, stores, places of or establishments that provide entertainment, health care facilities, shelters, government offices, youth service providers including adoption and foster care providers, and transportation. Forms of discrimination include the exclusion and denial of entry, unequal or unfair treatment, harassment, and violence. This discrimination prevents the full participation of LGBTQ people in society and disrupts the free flow of commerce. (S. 788, 116th Cong. 2019)

Thus, the goal of the Equality Act is to ultimately prevent such discrimination so LGBTQ+ individuals can benefit from full participation in servicescapes such as commercial establishments, like retail stores, banks, healthcare providers, and transportation services, among other areas of life (Human Rights Campaign 2019). This bill would grant consumers with stigmatized gender and sexual identities some protection under the law, and perhaps make them feel more comfortable to express their sexual identities in the marketplace. While the current bill does mention bisexual people, it does not address issues specific to this community that do not impact other members of the LGBTQ+ community, which will ultimately limit its effectiveness to protect bi+

consumers. As is evident, the anti-discrimination bill does not make clear whether or not bi+ persons are protected (Greenesmith 2019). “Where a local, state, or federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, the agency charged with administering that law should make explicit that discrimination against a person based on their bisexuality is impermissible” (Greenesmith 2019, p. 69). This could be as simple as including the word “bisexual” in the policy or including examples of the types of people the policy protects and citing an individual who has partners of different genders at different times.

Third, the stigma that bi+ consumers experience points to the need of greater institutional support for this group. Many stigmatized identities can rely on specific non-profit organizations for needed resources related to their health and well-being. However, non-profit organizations that serve bi+ individuals often do not receive the support they need, and non-profit organizations that serve the entire LGBTQ+ community often do not offer bi+ specific resources. Why is this? According to the Movement Advancement Project’s (MAP) 2016 report, there are several reasons bi+ people do not benefit from resources targeting the LGBTQ+ community. These include skepticism that many existing supports still harbor negative ideas or stereotypes of bi+ identities, lack of knowledge or awareness of bi+ identities, and lack of funding for bi+ resources. This lack of support leads to avoidance behavior, or the practice of withdrawing, among bi+ consumers of nonprofit servicescapes. Yet, these are the very places that try to serve as primary providers in connecting bi+ people to resources and community.

While many of these organizations use bi+ statistics that demonstrate a need for resources to gain grant money, almost none of that money gets allocated to bi+-specific

resources (Funders for LGBTQ Issues 2016). For example, in 2016, of the $202 million LGBTQ grant dollars, only $300 went to resources designed specifically for bi+ people. For reference, in the same year, $4,029,117 went to programming for lesbians and queer women and $9,126,551 to gay men, queer men, and men who have sex with men (Funders for LGBTQ Issues 2016). Similarly, Sara Ramirez, a famous bi+ actress recently received a refund on her donation to the NYC LGBT Center which she gave so that the center could provide training and assessments for staff around the bi+ community (Gilchrist 2019). The organization chose to refund her donation instead of providing a service which is integral to the very nature of the organization's mission. Ramirez was able to give her donation to BiNet USA, a national organization serving bi+ people (Gilchrist 2019). It is still unfortunate that the "B" is not perceived to belong in LGBTQ+ even within resources provided by and for this very community. While many LGBTQ+ non-profit organizations include the "B" in their title, they often do little to serve the needs of the bi+ consumer segment which may increase concealment practices such as withdrawing among bi+ consumers, and impact their participation in both the for-profit and non-profit marketplace.

LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT STUDY AND FUTURE WORK

Despite the novel aspects of the current study, there exist limitations. First, while the current project makes contributions to the servicescapes framework (Bitner 1992), I only discuss those aspects of the servicescapes that informants brought up organically. Thus, the current study sheds light on the dimensions of servicescapes that contribute to inclusion. Future work can investigate the entire servicescape

framework, and probe into each specific dimension at its impact on the inclusiveness of the servicescape.

Second, though the current project focuses on a variety of different types of servicescapes, future work should consider non-profit servicescapes. Often, non-profit service providers seek to minimize and eliminate suffering due to stigma. In the case of consumers with concealable identities, they may in fact exacerbate the stigma and lead consumers to avoid the non-profit servicescape. Additionally, current work should examine how e-servicescapes create and maintain inclusive environments online. Even still, future work might consider the perspectives of service providers who do not view providing an inclusive servicescape as a priority. Lastly, future work should look at large corporations that seek to provide an inclusive servicescape. While informants in this dissertation mentioned corporations such as Michael's, Target, TJ Maxx, and Starbucks as being inclusive, the service provider informants in this dissertation all owned or worked for small businesses.

Third, while the current study does shed some light on how staff experience inclusive servicescapes, future studies are needed in order to dig deeper into the lived experience of staff members. As noted by one informant, Monica, patrons and staff often experience the same inclusive servicescape in many different ways. For example, Starbucks has been lauded by consumers as an exemplar of inclusion, even going so far as to release advertisements showing staff members calling a trans patron by their preferred name (Bollinger 2020). However, the release of this ad was met with backlash from trans employees stating that the coffee giant is not an inclusive space for them as workers (Strapagiel 2020). The staff perspective of inclusive servicescapes, as well as the

similarities and differences from the consumer perspective, is a fruitful area for future work.

Fourth, the current study provides a qualitative, in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of consumers with stigmatized identities and inclusive servicescapes. Future work should build on the current study by testing different signals of inclusion among diverse consumer groups and their allies to determine the most effective way for servicescapes to communicate their inclusive environment.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation adds to our knowledge in several ways. For consumers who have a hidden stigmatized identity, market spaces can be scary and even dangerous. These consumers utilize practices of concealing and revealing in their everyday lives to balance their consumption needs with their overall well-being. Beyond coping, consumers with concealable stigmatized identities conceal and reveal on their own terms, alone and with others. Service providers who seek to create and maintain inclusive service spaces are often aware of the tradeoffs that consumers make, and try to structure their servicescapes in ways that enable consumers with stigmatized identities to be their whole selves and still engage in market spaces. We all have a role to play in the spaces we occupy, and a responsibility to stand up for those who experience discrimination by simply existing in a space.

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APPENDIX

EXHIBIT 1: INTERVIEW GUIDES

CONSUMER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Please tell me a little bit about yourself.
How did you become involved with the [name of group]? If not in the group then just ask them about themselves.

When did you first start identifying as _____? Tell me about it. [some probes: who did you first come out to? Tell me about that experience].
And these days, in your everyday life, how do you share your bi+ identity with others?

- Any bi+ items? Pride gear?
- How do you share your bi identity with others when you are in public? [how visible?]

I am particularly interested in your experiences as a bi+ consumer, so I'm going to ask you several questions on this topic.

First, why don't you tell me about the types of places that you like going for shopping or leisure in general? It can be any kind of store: coffee shops, libraries, restaurants, clothing, salons, etc.

Of these places, let's pick up one that you like and go regularly. What is special about that place?
In this place, what has been your experience as a bi+ person like?

- Probe as much as possible into the "revealing/concealing" aspect.
- Have you shared or expressed your bi+ identity in this place? Tell me the story.
- How does that make you feel? Tell me about that being important to you?

Repeat questions for 1-2 more places (try to sample different types of retailer).

Now, the opposite kind of question. In which kinds of places, for shopping and leisure, have you had negative experiences as a bi+ person?

- Probe as much as possible into the "revealing/concealing" aspect.
- Have you shared or expressed your bi+ identity in this place? Tell me the story.
- Have you reported your experience to anyone at the store? What happened?
- Have you reported your experience out of the store (e.g., to friends or social media)? What happened?

Now, I'd like to talk specifically about entertainment venues, like movie theaters and bars. What have been your experiences as a bi+ person in these places?

- Where are you likely to go? Are you "out" there? Who do you go with?

In the realm of shopping and leisure, one more question. What have been your experiences as a bi+ person when travelling? (e.g., in hotels)
Let's now move away from shopping and leisure. I'm also interested in your experiences as a bi+ person in the healthcare system. What have been your experiences as a bi+ person in this realm?

- How did you decide whether or not to share your bi+ identity with your primary care provider?
- Any experiences that have stuck with you? That you tell other bi+ people about?
- What types of experiences have you had with mental health services?
    - How did you decide whether or not to share your bi+ identity with your provider?

Also regarding health and fitness, what have been your experiences as a bi+ person when exercising?

- What types of experiences have you had at a gym or fitness center?
    - Any experiences that have stuck with you? That you tell other bi+ people about?
- What types of experiences have you had playing an organized sport?
    - Any experiences that have stuck with you? That you tell other bi+ people about?
- Do you feel you've had to modify your behavior in these spaces because you are bi+?

How about being a bi+ person at school or in college? Tell me more about that.

- Have you shared or expressed your identity there? Tell me the story.

I am also interested in your experiences as a bi+ consumer online.

- What sites do you prefer to use for shopping?
    - Experiences on these sites as a bi+ person?
        - Positive and negative (and neutral)
- For socializing (social media)?
    - Have you shared your bi+ identity on these sites? Tell me the story.

In general, what is it like to be a bi+ person online?

- Are there any sites where you modify your behavior because you are bi+?
- Are there sites you avoid? For what reasons?

What is dating like for a bi+ person? Probe to get at how they reveal / conceal to their date / significant other

- Tell me about a time you shared your identity with a date / significant other.

What is online dating like for a bi+ person?

- Are there sites you prefer? For what reasons?
- How do you share your identity on the site or with dates? Tell me more about that.

This is a very important topic with a lot of ground to cover. What questions am I not asking? Is there something you would like to share that you didn't get to or that I didn't ask about?

Demographic Q's: Gender, Sexual Identity, Age, Race, Ed, Occ.

If they share that they work in a service context I will ask to what extent they are out at work and how visible it is. Do customers comment on it?

MANAGER INTERVIEW GUIDE

To get started, could you please tell me a little bit about the business and your role here?
- And what are your responsibilities?
- Probe if needed: How did you come to work at (name of the business)?
- How long has the business been here?

I've noticed that you have (an indicator of safe space). This term is often used. But I was wondering if you could tell me, as a background, what is your idea of a safe space in your area of business (bakery, salon, etc.).

Tell me about how you came up to the decision of making your business a safe space.

How do you communicate this aspect of your business to customers?
- What was the decision process like to put the safe space sign up?
- What about social media or email? – what is the content of these?
    - [ask to get access to examples of emails, posts, etc.]

Which aspects of the business were influenced by the decision of creating a safe space?
- Probes: decoration; signage; bathrooms; hiring process

Where do you think the business has been successful in creating an inclusive space?
- How can you tell? (EVIDENCE)

What were the challenges to creating an inclusive space?
- Any push backs?
- Dig deeper here

Where has the business fallen short in creating an inclusive space?
- What do you think needs to be better?

In general, how do customers express feedback if they experience this place as unsafe?
- Positive v. Negative?
- Have you had customers express feedback over your inclusive space signal?
    - What was it?
    - How did you respond?

Moving forward, do you plan to make any changes regarding inclusion at your business?
- Customer perspective?
- Staff?

What's one thing you're most proud of on this topic? One thing you think needs to change?

Demographic Q's: Gender, Sexual Identity, Age, Race, Ed, Job title, years of experience, years in current position, years with current business

Maybe. If they are part of a marginalized group this may be beneficial to follow up about their thoughts on safe and inclusive spaces in the marketplace.

EXHIBIT 2: IRB FORMS

CONSUMER RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hello, I am Abby Nappier Cherup, a doctoral student in the Marketing department at UNL. I am writing to offer individuals who experience attraction to more than one gender an opportunity to participate in a research study examining representation in mainstream advertising. I am hoping to gain your insights in order to conduct productive work on the issue of mainstream visibility of individuals who identify as non-monosexual (such as bisexual or pansexual), and would really appreciate your help.

In order to participate, you must have a sexual identity characterized by attraction to more than one gender. You do not need to be a student or affiliated with the university in any way in order to participate. Interviews will be conducted at a location that is comfortable for, and agreed upon by, you, the interviewee.

Participation will include completing a one-on-one interview in which I will share advertisements with you and seek your interpretations of and comments about the ads. Your name and any identifying information will NOT be shared or in any way linked to the data. All identifying information will be kept confidential. Interviews will last between 45-60 minutes and will be audio recorded (per consent of the interviewee). You have the right to withdraw from this study at any point in the recruitment or interview process without affecting your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Please feel free to pass this e-mail onto your classes, peers, and colleagues who may be interested in participating. If you have any questions or concerns or want to participate, please contact me at, abigail.nappier@huskers.unl.edu. Please know that your contribution will help raise awareness and understanding of the experiences of non-monosexual individuals.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Abigail "Abby" Nappier Cherup Ph.D. Student Marketing Department
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study led by researchers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). This study will seek to broaden our understanding of the unique stigma faced by individuals who experience attraction to more than one gender and attend the Bi/Pan Group. As a member of this social group, I (Abby) am seeking your input regarding your personal and collective experiences as someone who identifies as bisexual, pansexual, or otherwise non-monosexual. I am conducting observations of group activities and participants over the course of the study to better understand the range of activities bi+ individuals take part in when they come together as a community, as well as individual's participation in those activities. For this research, participant observation will include one to two years of observation at group meetings and events. Individuals 19 years of age and older will be observed as part of the study, as this is the age of adulthood in the state of Nebraska.

The project coordinators on this study are Abigail (Abby) Nappier Cherup and Les Carlson, from the Department of Marketing at UNL. Abby will be observing group meetings as part of her dissertation research.

What will you be asked to do?
If you decide to participate, researchers on this study will conduct ongoing participant observations during group meetings and content review of group-related interactions and artifacts, such as meetings, circulated documents, posts to the Facebook group, and other media pieces. If you prefer not to be observed, please let us know and we will not record any observations about you. You will not be asked to do anything specific for this study.

Confidentiality
The information you provide will be treated with professional confidence. No information, which might directly identify you, will be presented in any research papers or communications.

All notes taken during meetings will be kept on password-protected computers or in locked offices of project researchers in the Department of Marketing at UNL. Data will be retained for the purpose of future research.

It is important to remember that participant observations are conducted at public gatherings and are, therefore, somewhat public information. We cannot guarantee confidentiality of public documents or public interactions. However, investigator notes from participant observations at public events will be kept confidential and will only be shared among research team members.

Benefits
Although there may be no direct personal benefits of participation to you, your participation and experiences may help diffuse an understanding of the unique stigma faced by bi+ individuals.

Risks
Except for your time, there are no foreseeable risks to you in participating in this study.

Voluntary
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to have your participation observed as part of this study. You can also withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Contact information
If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study, please contact:

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If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact:

Research Responsibility IRB Office
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
(402) 472-6965

Your signature indicates that you have read this consent form, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation in this research and voluntarily consent to participate.

Name of Participant (please print) _____

Signature_____

Date_____

Preferred Pseudonym (optional) _____

I give my permission to be quoted directly in publications without using my name.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM
(INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS)

Title of the Study: Visibility of Boundary Identities

Principal Investigator: Abigail Nappier Cherup (phone: (269) 870-5779; email:

abigail.nappier@huskers.unl.edu)

Secondary Investigator: Les Carlson (phone: (402) 472-9777; email: lcarlson3@unl.edu)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH
You are invited to participate in a research study about representation and advertising. You have been asked to participate because you have expressed an interest in discussing the ways in which we see representation in advertising. The purpose of the research is to further understandings of how non-monosexual individuals understand representation in advertisements. This study will include individuals recruited on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's campus and in the Lincoln community. The research will consist of in-depth interviews conducted on the University of Nebraska--Lincoln's campus. Audio files will be made of your participation. Only Abigail Nappier Cherup and James Gentry will listen to the files. The files will be kept until they are transcribed.

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?
If you decide to participate in this research you will be asked to provide basic identifying information and participate in an interview. Your will participate in one interview which will last approximately 60 minutes. You must be 19 years of age or older. Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision will not affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?
There is a possibility that you might say something in an interview that may be embarrassing if made public. In order to protect your privacy and minimize any risk to you, all identifying information will be changed in final reports. All data will be kept in a locked facility, and all research notes and recordings will be kept on a locked hard drive. All data collected for this study will be destroyed after five years.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?
We don't expect any direct benefits to you from participation in this study.

HOW WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?
While there will probably be publications as a result of this study, your name will not be used. Only characteristics will be published. If you participate in this study, we would like to be able to quote you directly without using your name. If you agree to allow us to quote you in publications, please initial the statement at the bottom of this form.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research after you leave today you should contact the Principal Investigator Abigail Nappier Cherup at (269) 870-5779. You may also call the Secondary Investigator James Gentry at (402) 472-9777.

If you are not satisfied with the responses of the research team, have more questions, or want to talk with someone about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Research Responsibility IRB Office at 402-472-6965.

As part of UNLs ongoing accreditation efforts, Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protections Program (AAHRPP) standard I-4: The Organization responds to concerns of research participants, encourages Human Research Protections Programs (HRPP) to conduct evaluation of research participant satisfaction. In order to meet this standard, we have created an online feedback survey. All investigators are now required to include the following statement and survey link in all written informed consent information documents: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln wants to know about your research experience. This 14 question, multiple-choice survey is anonymous; however, you can provide your contact information if you want someone to follow-up with you. This survey should be completed after your participation in this research. Please complete this optional online survey at: http://bit.ly/UNLresearchfeedback

Your signature indicates that you have read this consent form, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation in this research and voluntarily consent to participate. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Name of Participant

(please print)_____

Signature_____

Date _____

I give my permission to be quoted directly in publications without using my name.

TABLE 1

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Gay*	A word describing a man or a woman who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, and relationally attracted to members of the same sex.
Lesbian*	A woman who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, and relationally attracted to women.
Bisexual*	A person who can be attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity. "Bi" is often used as an abbreviation.
Pansexual*	A person who can be attracted to any sex, gender or gender identity.
Transgender*	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, etc.
Cisgender	A person whose self-identity conforms with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex (Tate, Bettergarcia, and Brent 2015).
Queer	A term used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and often transgender people. Some use queer as an alternative to "gay" in an effort to be more inclusive, or as a way to express a fluid identity (Transgender Terminology 2014)
Genderqueer	Refers to individuals who identify as neither entirely male nor entirely female (Transgender Terminology 2014)

*Terms and definitions are taken from the Human Rights Campaign's 2014 report titled, *Supporting and Caring for our Bisexual Youth*

TABLE 2

RISK FACTORS AFFECTING BI+ PEOPLE

Study by	Risk Factor(s)	Findings
Pew Research Center (2013)	Being out / belonging	Bi people are less likely to be out to all or the most important people in their lives (28%) compared to gay (77%) and lesbian (71%) people.
	Financial strain /poverty	More bi people have an annual family income of less than $30,000 (48%) compared to gay men (30%), lesbians (39%), and all adults (28%) in the U.S.
Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2010)	Poverty	Almost half (48%) of bi women live on an income 200% below the federal poverty level, compared to about a third of lesbian women (34%).
Long et al. (2007)	Anxiety, depression, and negative affect	Bi people have significantly higher symptoms of anxiety, depression, and negative affect than both their gay, lesbian, and straight counterparts.
	Suicidality	Bi people have significantly higher suicidality than their straight counterparts.
Kerr, Santurri, and Peters (2013)	Suicidality, self-harm	Bi women have significantly higher rates of suicidality and self-harm than their straight lesbian women.
Walters, Chen, and Breiding (2013)	Sexual violence / intimate partner violence	Both bi women (74.9%) and men (47.4%) are more likely to experience sexual violence than gay (40.2%), lesbian (46.4%), and straight (women = 43.3%; men = 20.8%) people.
Jorm et al. (2002)	Depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	Bi women had higher depressive symptoms and higher levels of PTSD following attempted or completed male-perpetrated sexual assault than straight and lesbian women.
	Formal support	More bi women reported the sexual assault to a formal source (ex: doctor) (71.4%) as compared to lesbian (63.3%) and straight (58.2%), yet fewer bi women found these sources to be helpful (37.9%) as compared to lesbian (71.4%) and straight (64.2%) women.

	Social support	Bi women received the fewest positive responses from their social support sources.
Ward et al. (2014)	Health-related behaviors: Cigarette smoking Alcohol consumption	More bi people are current cigarette smokers (29.5%) than gay and lesbian (27.2%) or straight (19.6%) people. More bi people have 5 or more alcoholic drinks per day (41.5%) than gay and lesbian (35.1%) or straight (26.0%) people.
Ward et al. (2014)	Health status indicators: Psychological distress Obesity	More bi people report experiencing serious psychological distress in the past 30 days (11%) compared to straight (3.9%) people. More bi women are obese (40.4%) compared to straight (28.8%) women.
Ward et al. (2014)	Health care access: Medical provider Medical care Health insurance	Fewer bi people have a usual place to go for medical care (72.5%) compared to straight (81.0%) people. More bi people failed to obtain needed medical care in the past year (16.5%) as compared to straight (8.8%) people. Fewer bi people have private health insurance coverage (57.1%) compared to gay and lesbian (68.9%) people.
Fuller v. Lynch	Denied asylum	The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit deported a bisexual man back to Jamaica, calling into question the legitimacy of his bisexual identity.

TABLE 3
CONSUMER INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

Name	Gender Identity	Sexual Identity	Age	Race	Education	Occupation
Amber	Non-Binary	Bisexual	30	White	Doctorate	Educator
Anna	Female	Bisexual	40	White	Some College	Delivery Rider
Cherrie	Female (Cis)	Bisexual	23	White	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Student
Dilbert	Male	Bisexual	25	White	Bachelor's Degree	Line Service Technician
Eleanor**	Female (Cis)	Queer	31	White	Bachelor's Degree	General Manager
Grace	Female	Queer	27	White	Bachelor's Degree	Software Engineer
Jess	Female	Queer	48	White	Associate Degree	Occupational Therapist
Kay	Genderqueer, Non-Binary	Bisexual	26	White	Bachelor's Degree	Nurse
Kelsey	Mostly Female	Queer	27	White	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Student
Lily*	Female	Bisexual	25	White	Bachelor's Degree	Customer Service Rep.
Maxwell	Male	Bisexual	26	White	Some College	Data Center Manager
Minerva	Female	Bisexual	28	Black & White	Master's Degree	Doctoral Candidate
Quinn	Genderqueer	Bisexual	25	White	Bachelor's Degree	Educator
Raquel	Female	Bisexual	27	Multiracial	Bachelor's Degree	Social Work Advocate
Sadie**	Female	Pansexual	26	White	Some College	Sales Manager; Bartender
Sam	Non-Binary	Pansexual	30	Korean	Bachelor's Degree	Artist
Suzanne	Female	Pansexual	40	White	Bachelor's Degree	Artist
Trevor	Male	Bi, Pan, Whatever	38	White	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Valerie	Non-Binary	Bisexual, Pansexual	29	White	Bachelor's Degree	Educator
Xander*	Basically Male	Bisexual	30	White	Bachelor's Degree	Software Developer
Zoe	Female (Cis)	Bisexual	24	Black	Bachelor's Degree	Research Assistant

*Co-Facilitators of the Bi Social Group **Informants provided consumer AND service provider data

TABLE 4
SERVICE PROVIDER INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

Name	Gender Identity	Sexual Identity	Age	Race	Education	Occupation	Name of Establishment	Years of Experience	Years in Current Position
Bridget	Female	Straight	36	White	Bachelor's Degree	Owner & Operator	The Crochet Cat	17	6.5
Chad	Male	Straight	36	White	Bachelor's Degree	Director of Operations	Midwest CrossFit	13	10
Cynthia	Female	Straight	33	White	Bachelor's Degree	Chef & Owner	Cornflower Bakery	15	6
Leah	Female	Straight	36	White	Bachelor's Degree	Owner	Sweet Parsnip's	10	1.5
Marie	Non-Binary	Very Queer	49	White	Doctorate	Founder, Licensed Psychologist	Interconnected Psychology	20	2
Monica	Female	Straight	35	White	Some College	Barista	Rouse Coffee & Espresso	15	15 years
Nick	Male	Straight	47	White	Middle School	Owner & Manager	The Downtown Café	33	33
Rachel	Female	Straight	40	White	High School Graduate	Owner/Here to Help	Galactic Cluster Brewery	12	1
Shannon	Female	Straight	32	White and Cree	Some College	General Manager	Blue River Books and Café	5	10 months

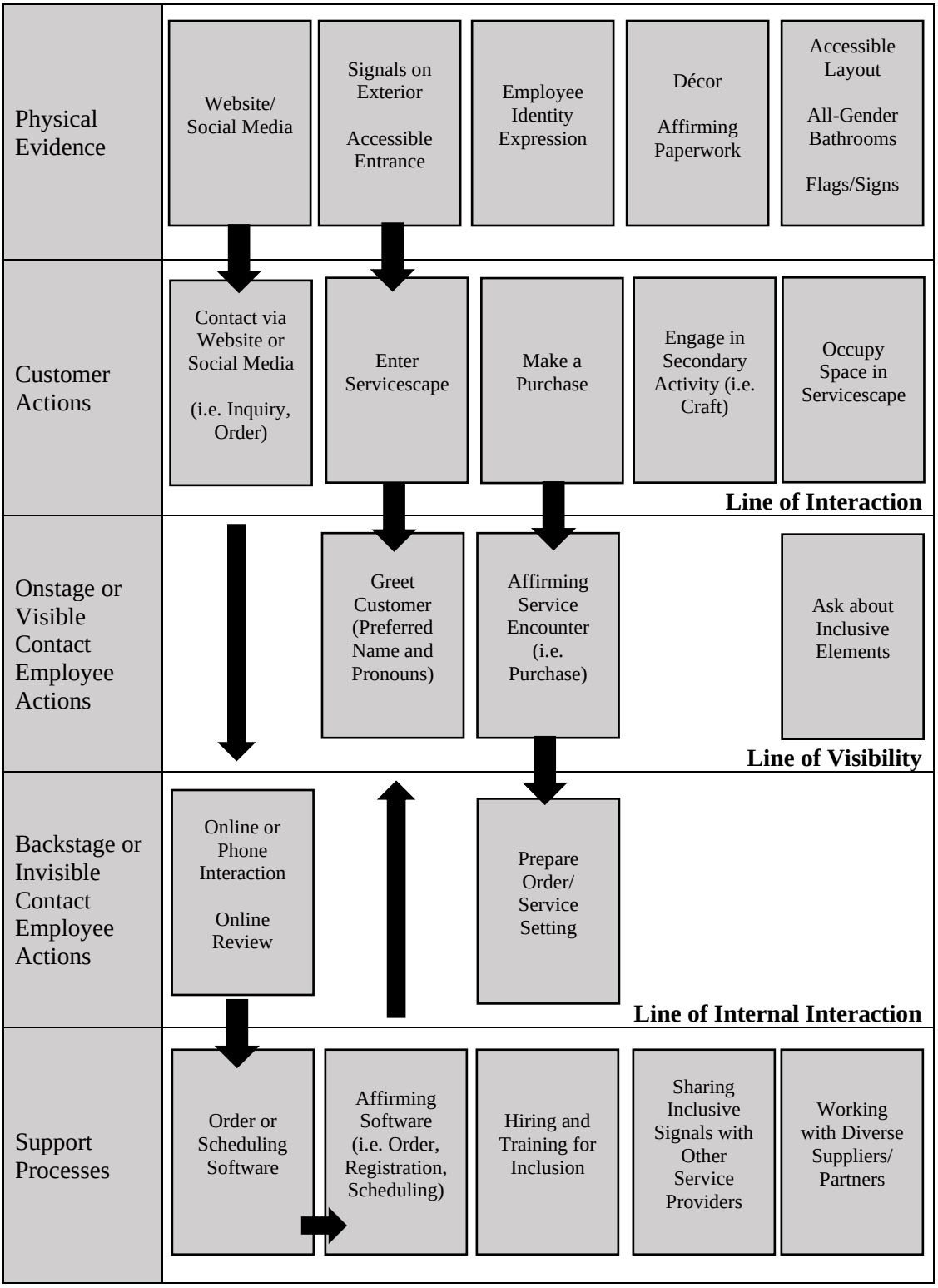
TABLE 5

FINDINGS: CONSUMER

	Individual	Collective
Conceal	Partially Withdrawing Camouflaging	N/A
Reveal	Narrowcasting Broadcasting Downplaying	Co-creating Safer Spaces Mapping Sites of Refuge

EXHIBIT 1

IDEAL SERVICE BLUPRINT FOR INCLUSION



Adapted from Bitner, Ostrom, and Morgan (2008)