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An Exploratory Ethnography of the Gendered Communicative Behaviors of Bouncers

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An Exploratory Ethnography of the Gendered Communicative Behaviors of Bouncers

This research study focuses on combining my interests in interpersonal communication and organizational communication, and work experience as club security. Specifically, the research explores the communicative behaviors of club security (i.e., bouncers) in two different situational contexts, specifically those based on population and demographic composition. The communicative behaviors of bouncers were explored in two specific contexts in the Midwest: (1) a college town with mid-size city population, and (2) an urban center of one of the largest cities in the U.S. Utilizing an ethnographic methodological approach – as a participant-observer – as the primary data source, a commitment of 32 hours of observations were recorded. Through field notes, the data collected focuses on a variety of security communicative behaviors and how those behaviors are similar and different depending on different situational contexts. In the end, the analysis of the data focuses on interpersonal factors, gendered communicative behaviors, and the relational and business orientations of bouncers.

Participant-Observer Observations: My Multidimensional Position(s)

A primary motivation for this research is my six months of working as a bouncer. Being my first and only experience as a bouncer, I was trained in ways un-parallel to what I thought was the stereotypical, traditional bouncer. I became very interested in the ways I was told to interact with patrons, both verbally and nonverbally, and wanted to further explore the actions of bouncers outside of my place of employment. This experience gave me an interesting vantage point to negotiate the ethnographic gaze as “participant,” both as a bouncer and patron, as well as an “observer,” in a scholarly sense.

Existing Literature on Bouncers

Defining the Role

In order to maintain a safe environment socializing in barrooms and other various types of night clubs, owners employ individuals to enforce safety and regulate alcohol consumption. These individuals represent a form of security and have multiple titles, including “security personnel, floormen, door supervisors, or most commonly, bouncers” (DeMichele & Tewksbury, 2004, p. 539). Traditionally, bouncers are perceived as young men, usually muscular, that enjoy violence. While studies of bouncers are absent in the field of communication, this abbreviated literature review will summarize existing research in other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and gender and women’s studies.

Body size and physical strength are key factors in the occupation of bouncing. In their study, Tewksbury and DeMichele (2004) consider these key traits as a necessity to the occupation. Their study of a strip club reports that the only male employees were bouncers, with the exception of the DJ and manager of the club. Job requirements were to “carry ice, stock the bar coolers with beer, remove trash, clean the parking lot of debris (usually broken beer bottles), escort female employees to their cars, coordinate with taxi cab services to transport customers, and perform other related tasks” (p. 544). Bouncers in the study were expected to regulate not only patrons’ behaviors – not allowing them to touch dancers and enforcing the one drink purchase per hour minimum – but also to monitor strippers’ actions while working as a way of making sure they are following the rules of their job

and conducting their job correctly.

In a study by Winlow, Hobbs, Lister, and Hadfield, one researcher was chosen to work as a bouncer, resulting in many different understandings from the unique perspective of a participant-observer. They concluded that customers understand the significance of muscles, the tattoos and shaved heads, and they learn to read the narratives of intimidation that provide order in venues that are steeped in intoxication and an escape from daytime regulation. In fact, being a bouncer allows a cultivation of hyper-masculine persona to be demonstrated and reinforced. As Goffman suggests, "From body language to the cut of their clothes to the way they smoke their cigarettes, these men present their behavior for display and their bodies become tools of 'impression management'" (as cited in Winlow et al. 2001, p. 541). Their bodies, expressions, tattoos, scared tissue, and body language all represent a means of messaging, easily understood by patrons: Do as we tell you and do it now" (Winlow, et al. 2001).

Aggression

By virtue of the job, many conflicts exist between club security officers (i.e., bouncers) and patrons. In one study, Tomsen (2005) created focus groups and designed interview questions specific for bouncers and patrons from various local venues in Newcastle/Hunter region of New South Wales. In these interviews patrons described many quarrels between themselves and bouncers, commonly perceiving bouncers as "bullies" who found enjoyment on victimizing smaller or intoxicated customers. They described their interactions with security as a "masculine rivalry over physical attributes" (p. 287). Several complained about how security bouncers amplify their immediate power over patrons with arbitrary decisions. They suggested that security bouncers often make inconsistent evaluations on who is allowed entrance into the club, generally favoring younger females, putting younger males under greater physical scrutiny. Participants also described instances where security bouncers held personal identification cards for no specific reason or overlooked acts of aggression or misbehavior from their own friends while at the club.

In an attempt to further understand predictors of aggression within the barrooms across multiple venues in Sydney, Australia, Homel, Tomsen, and Thommeny (1992) used a team of observers who spent 300 hours conducting unobtrusive observation in 23 sites within 17 separate licensed drinking establishments. An analysis of the data revealed "groups of male strangers, high boredom, and high drunkenness" (see also, Roberts, 2008) as the primary variable present during violent occurrences and in bars known to be high risk for violence. To supplement these predictors, unreasonable bouncers showing high levels of aggression were another variable present during violent occasions. Observers in this study reported witnessing bouncers initiating and encouraging fights between themselves and patrons as well as patron and patron. In addition, some occurrences of bouncers following patrons out of the venue and into the parking lot to continue fighting were reported. Bouncers observed in the study indirectly contributed to aggression in one of the bars by ignoring unruly patron behavior. At least one fight observed in this bar occurred after bouncers failed to address complaints by females regarding unwanted sexual contact, leaving it up to male companions of these females to resolve these situations.

In another study conducted by Roberts (2007), the absence of bouncers and doormen was revealed as the strongest predictor of aggression in Hoboken, New Jersey barrooms. Physical aggression was defined as "deliberate unfriendly bumping, grabbing, pushing, punching, kicking, etc." (p. 432). Non-physical aggression included "one-way abuse, heated arguments, and challenges and threats" (p. 432). While bouncers and doormen were drinking alcoholic beverages while on duty, aggression was witnessed in 74.1% of the observation periods. When bouncers and doormen were not drinking only 8.8% of the observation periods witnessed aggression. Aggression was 36.342 times greater when bouncers and doormen were not present compared to being present and not drinking (Roberts, 2007).

While working as a bouncer, one researcher took into account the significance of actually being *one of them*. That is, the primary researcher was required to “talk like them, laugh at the same jokes, comment on the same things, and express similar opinions and sentiments” (Winlow et al., p. 543). The premise was that failure to assimilate to the co-culture within the club would result in exile from the group or create obstacles for the research. The researcher also took note on the attire of patrons and the connection to aggression from bouncers: “Wearing your Sunday best informed the bouncers that you were less likely to get in a fight and so damage your attire. Jeans and trainers were fighting clothes and more likely to be worn when with a large group of male friends” (p. 544).

Women's Role

Limited studies exist that study the increasing role that women are playing as bouncers. The role of the bouncer has been defined by power, control, toughness, and violence—all traits that would be considered as masculine. However, as more and more women have served in the role of a bouncer, some studies have challenged this traditional gendered role. Empirical research indicates that male bouncers are most likely to embrace a violent approach to bouncing (Hobbs, O'Brien, and Westmarland, 2007, p. 24).

One interview conducted by Hobbs et al. (2007) depicted a female's perspective on females in the occupation. The participant in the interview has worked as a bouncer for six years before starting up her own security company in North West of England explained that:

Women are a necessity in the business. I used to look at it as women providing a niche market but it's not anymore, women have to be employed in these venues. You can't have men searching women or dragging women out of toilets with their knickers round their ankles. It's a necessity; it's got to be done. You need females in those roles to deal with those situations. (p. 24)

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is now actively attempting to ‘clean up’ the image of bouncing, and a strategy being used to achieve this objective is placing more women in the occupation. In this effort, the attempts to remove the violent and aggressive view of bouncing are helped by having more women present. Women are perceived to have “emotional qualities more suited to the non-aggressive style of door work that the State via SIA is advocating” (Hobbs et al., 2007, p. 25). After interviewing one of the first club owners in the area to employ females as bouncers, it was reported that women generally had a better attitude, showed less aggression, and showed a better ability of ‘talking down’ to the patron who was angered.

In summary, many different key points were found within the interdisciplinary literature already pertaining to bouncers. Bouncers are stereotyped as being large, muscular men who have a tendency toward violence. Many conflicts arise between bouncers and patrons, and blame usually is typically placed on the bouncers for being “bullies” or “looking for a fight” from the perspective of patrons. Women are an increasing amenity to the occupation and are believed to conduct the job in a calmer manner compared to men in certain contexts. Although bouncers are sometimes held responsible for increased aggression and violence, it has been found that aggression and violence were more likely without their presence. Legalties also come into play when bouncers conduct their jobs. This is mostly due to unclear discretion allowed to be acted upon by the bouncers. Given all of this, the objective of this particular research project is to investigate the communicative behaviors of bouncers in two different contextual locales. More specifically, I will utilize an ethnographic methodology to explore the following research question: *What communicative behaviors do bouncers, in two different situational contexts, use in their interactions with patrons?* The next section outlines the methods for the exploratory study.

Methods: Observer-Participant Ethnography

The data for this paper was collected through observations by one researcher acting as an observer-participant. According to Rubin, Rubin, and Piele (2000), “ethnography is used to form objective descriptions of social norms and events as they occur” (p. 205). Ethnographers try to explain behavioral commonalities within social situations. An ethnographer may also interview those involved with the observation, as well as examine documents and artifacts to supplement the observations. This technique usually results in a case study such as describing the culture of a classroom, the language used by superiors and subordinates in an organization, or the social rules of male and female children at play on the playground (p. 205). In this research study, ethnography was used to observe the communicative behavior of bouncers in relations to patrons at two different venues.

Consistent with DeMichele and Tewksbury (2004), I utilized an ethnographic approach when studying bouncers. More specifically, I modeled my research after this particular study in terms of note taking while in the field. Throughout that study, the primary researcher took notes on loose paper found within the bar such as napkins or receipts within a private location such as a bathroom stall. These field notes were transcribed at a later time, parallel to how data was gathered for this study. Also consistent with DeMichele and Tewksbury (2004), both that research study and this one focused on the broad sociological issue of how masculinity is central to the social control activities within the specific setting. Although the setting of the research of DeMichele and Tewksbury’s (2004) study was a strip club, masculinity played a key role in both the strip club research as well as the two locations chosen in this research study – both of which included actively monitoring and controlling the patrons in these socially constructed environments.

For my research project, observations took place in two locations in the Midwest: (1) a college town with mid-size city population, and (2) an urban center of one of the largest cities in the U.S. These locations were chosen for two main reasons. First, both locations were well known for high occupancy during the observation times chosen, and second, both locations hosted to the necessary demographic composition desired at each location. I conducted observations on four separate weekends: a Thursday and Friday night at each location, and a Friday and Saturday night at each location. During each night, four hours of observation took place from 10 p.m. until 2 a.m. By the end of data collection, sixteen hours of observation were completed at each venue, totaling 32 hours of observations in all.

The decision on what bars to make observations at were dependent on multiple factors. First, I needed to go to a bar where the entrance would easily be granted to avoid loss of observation time. Second, bars selected needed to fit the demographic composition desired. In the college town venue, a population consisting of college attending males and females between the ages of 21 and 28 was necessary, whereas the venue located in one of the largest cities in the U.S. needed to fulfill a population of males and females not specific to the traditional college aged patron. In the large city, a population with adults in their 20’s was the main focus – similar to, but different from the first ethnographic site. Third, the bars selected needed to have a security force large enough to study the communicative behavior of multiple employees in easily accessible ways. Accordingly, the size at the college town venue was 8 to 11 bouncers and 400 – 500 patrons, whereas the size in the large city was 14 to 16 bouncers and 500-1,000 patrons. After researching various bars in these two locations via Internet and personal and professional networks, two locations were selected. Anticipation of maximum capacity being reached at each venue was taken into account, so early arrival was a necessity. To avoid being noticed, I sought to assimilate with other patrons within the venue, and could not openly take field notes. Instead, notes were taken down from time to time in private settings (e.g., personal automobile, bathroom stalls, etc.). The next sections of the paper highlight the different points of analysis that were revealed through my ethnographic observations.

Ethnographic Observations: Three Points of Focus

The following ethnographic descriptions are organized around three points of focus: (1) physical environment, (2) gendered communicative behaviors, and (3) relational versus business orientations. I begin by describing the physical environment of each venue.

Physical Environment

Large city venue

The entrance from the street has two doormen standing side by side in front of the doorway. After a proper identification check, no cover is charged and no wrist band is given. The entrance leads directly to a stairway which hosts the venue entrance at the top. There is a bouncer standing in place at the top of the upstairs entrance way. The entrance is at the top of the stairs, and is closed off by a built in walkway that can only be entered or exited through the end of the stairway.

Directly in front of the entrance is a DJ booth that reaches shoulder height. The DJ booth is about 20 feet long and looks like a bar. Facing directly opposite of the DJ booth, at the complete opposite wall of the venue, is the front stage. The stage is small, maybe 15 foot-by-15 foot, with a small bar to the left of it that is about 10 feet long. A bouncer stands to the left of this small bar. To the left of the small bar is an upper level that is surrounded by railing. A bouncer stands at the entrance of this upper level, leaning against the railing. The upper level can only be entered in front from the dance floor, or in back by the restrooms.

There is a large dance floor in front of the DJ booth, located near the entrance. The floor of the dance floor is made up of square, white, shiny tile. Between the DJ booth and the stage represents the north and south area boundary of the dance floor. To the east side of the venue, there is a large bar alongside the wall representing the eastern side boundary of the dance floor. Throughout the night, multiple bouncers weave their way through the many patrons scattered throughout the dance floor. The dance floor hosted the majority of the patrons within the venue throughout the night.

In the back southwestern corner of the venue, parallel with the stairway entrance but at opposite walls of the venue, is a sectioned-off darker area away from the dance floor. This sectioned-off area is a type of "lounge" with red carpet and leather couches. Within this area are four sets of "U" shaped couches able to seat 15 people at each. Behind these couches on the north and south walls that enclose the sectioned off darker area, are posters and artwork on the wall of naked women, past musicians such as Jimi Hendrix and Robert Plant, and decorative mirrors that cover the walls. At the end of the 10-foot walkway that separates the two sets of couches, is a bar the stretches across the west wall of the section. In this "lounge" area, a bouncer roams freely, picking up empty drink glasses and bottles, and cautiously watching patrons.

College Town Venue

Entrance is through a set of big barn stable-type doors. Three doormen stand at the entrance to check for proper identification. The entrance walkway is roped off to divide entrance and exit lines. The entrance walk way leads to the right and ends at a small booth with a desk where a cover charge is collected, proper identification is checked, and a wrist band is given. Turning directly left of the booth is a walkway to the main bar area.

Along the left hand side of the walkway is railing which is about waist high. To the right are two steps that lead up to an upper level. Directly in front is a large square bar that surrounds the mechanical bull. This walkway leads in one of two directions; right to the upper level or left which leads to the main bar. Between the steps to the upper level and the main bar is about 40 feet. On the left hand side of this walkway is railing which sections off an area of tables and chairs known as the "VIP" section. To the left, following alongside the railing that divides the "VIP" section from the walkway, the walkway ends at the main bar.

Facing right from the main bar there is a 15 foot space between the main bar and the bar that surrounds the mechanical bull. This walkway is about 100 foot long, which both bars running along each side. On the upper level are two pool tables to the right, and multiple tables and bar stools to the left. The upper level area is about 20-feet wide by 100-feet long. Halfway down the 100 foot stretch is the mechanical bull operation booth to the left. The mechanical bull is about a 40 foot by 40 foot area with a mechanical bull in the middle. It is a 5 foot by 5 foot booth with one employee, presumably a bouncer, operating it. Facing the booth, there are two TV's above the booth facing the main bar. At the end of the main bar, the bathrooms are directly to the left.

The dance floor is a large square. At the entrance of the dance floor area, directly left in the southwestern corner of the dance floor, is a tall DJ booth which can only be accessed by stairs against the west wall of the dance floor. Proceeding alongside the west wall to the northwest corner of the room is a large stage. This stage rests in the northwest corner of the dance floor area and is a triangular shape that comes out about 30 feet from the corner it rests in. On the stage, a bouncer stands front and center and observes the dancing patrons. Throughout the night, multiple roaming bouncers make their way through the dancing patrons, observing cautiously, but also laughing, smiling, and having friendly conversations with patrons.

On the east wall of the venue, located on the northeast corner of the upper level, is the back bar. This back bar is on the same level as the upper level near the entrance and they both connect. This back bar is up two steps and is about half the size of the main bar. A bouncer stands in center at the top of the steps to this back bar.

Venue comparisons

In comparing the two venues, a couple of differences were observed. The venue in the large city seemed to host a "classier" environment. This venue offered leather coaches for anyone to use, and the waitresses and servers were always dressed exuberantly and wearing attractive and expensive clothing. The bar stools consisted of shiny aluminum with comfortable leather tops. Tables were tile topped with foot rests. The men's room was clean, had a doorman who handed out paper towels by the door, and offered free gum, candy, cologne, condoms, mints, etc. in wicker baskets next to bathroom sinks, none of which was offered at the college town venue. The decorations were much more vintage and had a more fashionable look than the college town venue. The leather coaches, decorations, tile floor, lighting, color scheme, and employee attire created an elegant environment. The manager of the bouncers and assumed bar manager were always wearing button up shirts and ties and/or suits and ties, while the regular bouncer attire was made up of black undershirts, purple and black button up dress shirts, black polo's, dark slacks, and black dress shoes. Each bouncer also wore an ear piece to communicate with one another.

The venue in the small college town created a much different atmosphere. When initially entering, a cover amount is charged which was not present at the large city venue. The venue hardly had any seating, and the bar stools that were present were old, tarnished wood. The waitresses and servers had on t-shirts or polo t-shirts and were not as flashy as the large city venue waitresses and servers. The men's room was always dirty with paper towels and toilet paper lying all over the place, along with empty cups and broken beer bottles everywhere. The bouncer attire had similarities and differences to the attire in the large city venue. The bouncers wore dark polo's, had ear pieces, and wore dark shoes. However, the bouncers were dressed in jeans instead of black slacks, and did not have button up dress shirts. Also, no employee at the small college town venue stood out as a manager for all the bouncers wore the same attire.

Proxemics, defined as the study of individual's perception and use of space (Hall, 1968) of the two venues was another key difference. The venue in the large city was only

2/3rds the size of the venue in the college town, however, the venue in the large city generally drew in a larger amount of patrons, making the venue in the large city much denser. To supplement more patrons, the venue in the large city also had more bouncers on duty each night (14-16) of observation compared to the venue in the college town (8-11). These proxemics affected the location of bouncers that were given specific areas to monitor, affected the "roaming" bouncers when they moved through the crowd, and thus made an impact on the non-verbal communicative behaviors chosen.

Gendered Communicative Behaviors

Overall, there seemed to be a difference in terms of the gendered communicative behavior enacted at the two venues. At the large city venue, assertive, dominant, and report talk was expressed much more often than rapport, empathetic, and communicative behavior. During all nights of observation at the large city venue, the bouncer located at top of the stairway entrance seemed uneasy, and was moving around a lot. He maintained a stern facial expression with patrons as they entered. This bouncer was very critical of everyone who entered the venue. He gave nearly all patrons entering a very thorough look over, scanning them up and down with his gaze as they walked by.

The eight other bouncers were roamers and didn't have a direct post. They kept themselves spread out from one another, usually keeping a far distance from one another except when needing each other's assistance. These bouncers would walk throughout the entire club, getting as close as a few inches to patrons when weaving through the crowd. During "roaming," the bouncers were constantly scanning the crowd. Facial expressions were usually serious, somewhat intimidating looking. The bouncers rarely smiled or had facial expressions of joy, other than when talking to one another.

Roaming bouncers were not very friendly at the large city venue. During one instance a patron accidentally bumped into a bouncer, and the bouncer reacted in an angry manner. He gave the patron a dirty look and pumped his chest up toward the patron in a display of power. The patron reacted by putting up his hands to signal "I'm sorry" and the bouncer walked away sternly. The patron and his friends talked amongst each other with looks of disgust, presumably about the bouncer's attitude. This one specific bouncer seemed more irritated or in more of a negative mood than the other bouncers.

In one instance during a Thursday night a customer, presumably intoxicated, reached the top of the stairs and dropped a beer in front of the entrance bouncer at 11:34pm. The bouncer put his hand on the man's shoulder and said something to him. He allowed the man to enter, and spoke on his microphone to the other bouncers directly after the man walked past. At 11:42pm, the man was in the middle of the dance floor, dancing very aggressively, bumping into other patrons frequently and with force. Within moments of the man dancing on the dance floor, patrons showed signs of discomfort and uneasy or angry facial expressions. At 11:43pm, three bouncers from opposite directions made their way to the middle of the dance floor where the man was dancing. They formed a triangle around him, and all approached him simultaneously until standing within inches of the patron. One bouncer spoke with the man and the man responded. The bouncer put his hand on the man's shoulder and the man brushed it off. The other two bouncers' body language got tense when this happened. The bouncer again tried to put his hand on the man's shoulder and lean in to talk to him. The man brushed the hand off hard and put his chest into the chest of the bouncer speaking to him. At that moment, the other two bouncers present each grabbed one of the man's arms and escorted him out. At first the man put up a little struggle, but within seconds cooperated after a little coercion from the bouncers. The bouncers walked him all the way down the stairs to the entrance from outside where they helped him to the sidewalk and left him on his way.

At the college town venue, friendly communicative behavior was used and displayed more often. In situations of talking to patrons, one bouncer would approach the patron and

speak with them nicely, smiling, calmly, with a hand on the shoulder of the patron while another bouncer would keep an eye on the situation. In two instances of asking patrons to leave the venue, the patrons agreed with the bouncer and the bouncer walked within a foot or so next to the patron from the bar to the door.

In one instance a single bouncer did the same approach to a patron on the dance floor, talking to the patron nicely with one hand on the shoulder. The patron reacted in an upset manner. While the one bouncer approached, another bouncer kept an eye on him. When the patron reacted, two other bouncers came in for back up within five seconds. No force was necessary and the patron was eventually talked into leaving. All three bouncers walked out within an close distance with the patron. Overall, the bouncers at the college town venue expressed less dominant or powerful communicative behavior and seemed to practice much better communication competence. Communication competence refers to an individual's ability to use a variety of styles and strategies, contingent to the situation (Burke, Burroughs-Denhart, McClish, 1994). In most situations, bouncers at the college town venue were able to smooth situations over through communication and not by using physical force.

In summary, the bouncers in the large city were forced to communicate within a more tight-spaced environment. They expressed more assertive and dominant nonverbal communicative behavior such as crossed arms, stern facial expressions, and strong body posture. In the college town with more space, the bouncers expressed more passive and inviting nonverbal communicative behaviors such as pats on the back, high fives, smiles, or even hugs with patrons. This could possibly be due to established relationships with a "regular crowd" of patrons at the small college town venue compared to the diverse ever-changing crowd of patrons that enter the large city venue. The emergence of nonverbal communication differences across venues resonates with different orientations to being a bouncer. This point of insight is explored next.

Relational vs. Professional Orientations to Bouncing

Upon reflection, the gendered communicative behaviors of bouncers can be understood within a general orientation to their job responsibilities. This difference orientation seems to take the form of a relational versus business (non-relational) approach to interacting with patrons. Relational messages within relational communication are the communicative actions that attribute to framing and defining interpersonal relationships, and can be expressed verbally and nonverbally (Burgoon, Le Poire, 1999).

At the large city venue, most of the bouncers' communicative behavior was business oriented. The bouncer located in front of the DJ booth stood with his arms crossed, scanning the crowd and looking left into the "lounge." He kept a far distance from patrons until the dance floor became so packed that a closer distance was forced upon patrons. The dress code was very strict at the large city venue and bouncers expressed this to patrons often. When someone violated the dress code, a bouncer would approach the patron, put a hand on the patron's shoulder, and tell them to fix whatever violation was being broken. Bouncers did not interact with patrons in a friendly manner. No smiles, hugs or high fives were shared between any bouncers or patrons, maybe due to a large city bringing in more people and bouncers not establishing any relationships with specific patrons. Close distance was only reached in bouncer-patron interactions when a bouncer was telling a patron of a dress code violation, when moving through crowds of patrons, giving warnings, or asking patrons to leave.

At the college town venue, a mixture of both business and relational oriented communicative behavior was displayed. The bouncers clearly had established hand gestures and facial expressions that they used to communicate with each other in distances where verbal communication could not be deciphered. In multiple instances, bouncer-to-bouncer nonverbal communication was in display with fists held up and different fingers pointing to indicate different messages. This seemed to be a very effective medium that was used at the college town

venue quite often. Although very friendly to patrons, as the crowd increased, the bouncers socialized less and less. As more people showed up, bouncers seemed to be more focused. Bouncers would stand at their posts and be more observant of patrons.

In one instance of a fight between patrons, the business oriented non-verbal communicative behaviors were very vivid. Two male patrons began fighting on the dance floor at 1:12am on a Friday night of observation. The bouncer on the stage, as well as the bouncer on the back bar entrance way instantly ran out to the fight. Taking no time, the two bouncers did their best to intervene by getting in between the two patrons. Within five seconds, two more bouncers came to assist the situation. There were two bouncers to each patron as they pulled the two apart. The bouncers took the two patrons in opposite directions to exit the venue. The patron being escorted out the back way did not want to leave and gave the bouncers a hard time. Finally, the bouncers were forced to push, shove, and even carry the patron out of the venue. Once out of the venue, the patron gave in and left. The other patron who was escorted out the front was much more cooperative and walked out in a calm manner. Both patrons were out of the venue by 1:20am. At the college venue, bouncers would attend to fights outside the club, compared to city venue where they wouldn't because it wasn't part of their professional responsibility.

More clearly displayed at the college venue was relational oriented communicative behavior from the bouncers. Bouncers would approach patrons in a very "loose" manner, smiling, and an overall friendly manner. Facial expressions were smiles and very pleased. Occasionally bouncers would place their hands on the shoulders of patrons to get their attention and lean in close to speak into patrons ears so that patrons could hear. These types of interactions were presumably enacted when patrons were either making minor offenses or bouncers knew the patron and were just making a joke or friendly comment. When overhearing a conversation a patron was having with a bouncer at the bar, the bouncer articulated: "We are told to be friendly and not intimidating. When we stand we are told to not cross our arms (displays crossed arms), or 'mean mug' people (demonstrates a facial expression of anger). We want the customers to feel comfortable around us and seem approachable."

Discussion

After analysis, this research study had multiple key findings. First, the atmosphere and physical environment of each venue was different and may have played a role in the communicative behaviors of the bouncers. The large city venue was "classier" compared to the more casual college town venue. The physical environment was found to play key roles in multiple nonverbal communicative behaviors of the bouncers. Nonverbal communication, in a brief definition, refers to the nonverbal actions displayed by an individual within a communication situation generated by both the individual and influenced by the environment which hold value to the message being transmitted (Wang, 2009). Nonverbal communication, hosting a wide range of descriptions, can be broken down into seven categories; body motion and kinesic behavior, physical characteristics, touching behavior (haptics), paralanguage (tone, rate, pitch of voice), proxemics, artifacts, and environmental factors (Wang, 2009). Of these categories, proxemics were found most prevalent when observing bouncer-patron interactions, as well as bouncer-bouncer interactions.

Proxemics can be defined as the study of individual's perception and use of space (Hall, 1968). Where bouncers were posted, how they moved through crowds of patrons, as well as how bouncers communicated with each other were all influenced by the physical environment, and the space used within the venues. Proxemic perception is broken down into four categories dependent on distance; (1) Intimate space; 1.5 feet from an individual, (2) Personal space; 1.5-4 feet from an individual, (3) Social space; 4 – 12 feet from an individual, and (4) Public space; 12 feet and beyond an individual. During observation, it was found that bouncers at the large city venue generally attempted to stay at a social space from other

patrons, giving them the ability to observe a wide range of activity. Bouncers at the college town venue used a mix of proxemic distance, usually to engage with patrons in a friendly manner. However, when situations that called for aggressive actions at both venues cultivated, bouncers seemed to slowly stray away from social space, progressively approaching patrons and intruding personal and at times intimate space. This progression into different space boundaries was necessary in moments of patron aggression or misconduct, and other nonverbal cues such as haptics and kinesics became more apparent during these moments.

Haptics, described as touching actions (Wang, 2009), and kinesics, referring to body motion (Wang, 2009) were utilized much more often when infractions of personal and intimate space were necessary. As mentioned in observations, moments of aggression from patrons resulted in bouncers placing hands on shoulders of patrons, and when necessary, using hands and body to remove patrons from bars. This was witnessed at both venues. In contrast, less aggressive haptics and kinesics were witnessed at the college town venue, whereas more aggressive haptics and kinesics were witnessed at the large city venue. At the college town venue, hugs and “high-fives” were witnessed, whereas in the large city venue, only haptics and kinesics that required controlling aggressive patrons were witnessed. These similar and different uses of nonverbal communicative cues were believed to be influenced by the gendered communicative behavior, as well as the relational/business oriented communicative behavior at both venues.

At the large city venue, masculine and even hyper-masculine nonverbal communicative behavior was expressed much more fluently and often than androgynous non-verbal communicative behavior. At the college town venue, androgynous communicative behavior was used and displayed more often. Characteristics of feminine gendered language include rapport talk, empathy, and inclusive communication, whereas characteristics of masculine gendered language include report talk, assertiveness, competitiveness, and dominance (Dow, Wood, 2006). According to Bem (1974), androgynous communicators have high levels of both femininity and masculinity. Using an action based definition of gender in that gender is something we enact and something that we negotiate and think with, representing a social practice and a method of gaining cultural meaning (Rakow, 1986), we can see a direct connection between gender and communicator style. Norton (1983) defines communicator style as “an accumulation of ‘microbehavior’ giving form to literal content that add up to macro-judgement” (p. 38). This means that communicator style is a constant pattern of small, seemingly influential actions that are repeated time and time again. This is also true for gendered communication.

The combination of style and gender create many parallels. There are three general communicator styles identified by previous scholars; Rhetorically Sensitive, Noble Self, and Rhetorical Reflector (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998). Rhetorically Sensitive communicators can be described as individuals who show “concern for self, concern for others, and avoid being rigid in communication” (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998, p. 13). Noble Self communicators can be described as individuals who speak what is felt regardless of the situation (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998). Finally, Rhetorical Reflector communicators can be described as individuals who are unlikely to speak what they feel, feel concern for appropriateness in any given situation, and tend to blend in with the wishes of others without expressing their own (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998).

These three communicator styles show many parallels to masculine, feminine, and androgynous role characteristics. Traditionally, women have been found to make tentative statements, incorporating “tag questions, hedges, and qualifiers” (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998, p.13). By doing so, an atmosphere of inclusion and equal status is maintained. These characteristics could easily be representative in the style of Rhetorical Reflector. Men generally speak to defend or maintain personal status, in an assertive and unyielding manner

(House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998). This assertive and unyielding communication approach has similar characteristics to that of the Noble Self. Finally, similarities between an androgynous person and a Rhetorically Sensitive communicator include a balance of self-interest and concern for others, and the ability to select from a selection of multiple behaviors depending on the situation (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998). It was found that a combination of these dyadic views of communication were expressed and utilized by bouncers throughout observation at both locations.

In general, bouncers at the large city location tended to be masculine, Noble Self communicators when interacting with patrons, and even amongst themselves. Whether this be instances of social proximity, personal proximity, or intimate proximity, the overall perception in the large city venue was masculine communicative behavior. In contrast, witnessed at the college town venue was a more androgynous, Rhetorically Sensitive approach. Bouncers seemed to adjust their communicative behaviors based upon the situation much more often. This was not witnessed at the same magnitude at the large city venue.

The last significant finding from observation was the use of relational oriented communication versus the lack of relational oriented communication (coined business oriented communication). Relational messages are the communicative actions that attribute to framing and defining interpersonal relationships, and can be expressed verbally and nonverbally (Burgoon, Le Poire, 1999). There are many as twelve relational message dimensions, four of which were observed in various degrees at both venues; intimacy, dominance, composure, and formality (Burgoon, Le Poire, 1999). Intimacy refers to expression of "affection, closeness, interest, trust, openness, receptivity, familiarity, and similarity or their opposites toward the relational partner" (Burgoon, Le Poire, 1999, p. 107); dominance reflects different degrees of expression for "conversational control, assertiveness, power, persuasiveness" (p. 107); composure encompasses "expressions of arousal and tension or relaxation and composure that are tied to the relationship" (p. 107); and finally, formality which is important to task relationships and include "maintaining a polite, businesslike, and formal demeanor or inviting casualness and informality," (p. 107). Given this downsized framework of interpersonal relationships, examination of the four dimensions took place at both observation locations.

At the large city venue, dominance, both verbally and nonverbally, was fluently expressed. When communicating with patrons there were no smiles, no easy flowing conversation, and no lack of assertiveness. Little intimacy, composure, or formality were witnessed at the large city venue. In contrast, at the college town venue, dominance was only witnessed when necessary to take action. When patrons chose not to cooperate after multiple attempts, bouncers would enact dominance in their communication. Intimacy was witnessed quite often. Bouncers would hug, "high-five" and joke with patrons to show trust, openness, and similarity. Composure was also witnessed at the college town venue. Little tension was witnessed with the college town bouncers, and for the most part, they were in a relaxed state. Finally, formality was witnessed at the college town venue from bouncer/patron interactions in that bouncers always approached patrons politely and professionally, but showed a demeanor that invited casualness when the situation was appropriate.

Limitations

This study encountered multiple limitations. Only 32 hours of observation time were conducted, and the time slots were 10pm – 2am during each observation period. Additional time in the field and different time frames could have presented supplemental research at each venue. Observations were only taken on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Observations throughout different days of the week may have presented additional and/or different findings. A second limitation was the lack of interviews from bouncers and patrons. More interviews from both bouncers and patrons could have given the research a multifaceted perspective, both from an observer-participant and from a participant. Additionally, not being able to view

the entire venue all at one time served as a limitation. Undoubtedly, interactions and communicative behaviors went unnoticed due to the inability to cover the entire venue at one time. With multiple researchers, each venue could have been more thoroughly covered and observed.

Conclusion

With communicator style and gendered communication playing such a key role at each venue, the question of what style works best comes to mind. When training bouncers, should an androgynous, Rhetorically Sensitive be implemented when training bouncers? It was found that the two different venues enacted two different communicator styles. Were these styles implemented due to the context of each venue, or can a culture be developed where the Rhetorically Sensitive style can be utilized? Many gender studies have shown that men entering a “female” job or women entering a “male” job are forced to enact gendered norms established by the job, in turn creating gender within the job (Deutsch, 2007). Can a gendered norm be created within the occupation of bouncing, in turn resulting in less aggression from both bouncers and patrons?

It is clear that females in the occupation of club security should be more thoroughly examined. Further research could indicate major differences between males and females in the occupation. Also, security in different types of venues should be examined. That is, bouncers should be examined in different environmental contexts. The two venues chosen in this study were primarily dance clubs. Bouncers should be further studied in venues such as dive bars, strip clubs, piano bars, and various other types of venues. These different types of venues bring a different demographic composition and could play a key role in bouncer communicative behavior.

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