

The Firefighter, The Babysitter, and The Sacrificial Lamb: Identity and Consent Among  
Customer Service Supervisors

A Thesis

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## ABSTRACT

Despite decades' worth of research that has been devoted to the emerging field of customer service work, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the actual lived experiences of customer service *supervisors*. As a result, we find ourselves neglecting an integral part of this expanding work force, and are consequently ill-prepared to truly understand the field of customer service work. By drawing on data gathered from years of participant observation, and a number of in-depth interviews with both managers and workers employed in the shipping operations and customer service center of a Fortune 500 company, the author attempts to fill existing gaps in understanding regarding the motivations of the customer service supervisor. After comparing this newly gathered data to existing sociological theories of work and organizations, a more nuanced understanding of customer service management is put forth, and potential causes of managerial consent are proposed. In addition to understanding what factors lead supervisors to consent to their work conditions, this paper attempts to explain how this consent impacts the hourly workers at the bottom of the workplace hierarchy.

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## INTRODUCTION

When I first came to work at Trial Shipping Service I was still studying sociology as an undergraduate and taking part in a research assistantship where I studied team systems and unionization. In my new position overseeing dozens of parcel delivery drivers, I was fascinated and even delighted by their resistance to upper management's directives and considered myself a covertly sympathetic compatriot, expressing my independence in my own little ways whenever possible. I clearly remember spending my first six months there changing into my dress clothes on the company's time in the employee locker room, and explaining my actions to a friend of the family by saying "if they want me to dress up for this job, then they can pay me to do it!" I was pleased to have secured my employment there, but at the same time I had a passing knowledge of sociological theories of work and organizations, and I was not about to let myself be a corporate stooge. And yet as the months passed, I found myself working harder and harder to meet the goals placed before me by my supervisors and their supervisors, even though doing so guaranteed that I was making the job much harder on myself than it would have otherwise been. I approached every shift aware that I would be faced with answering up to four telephone lines at once and responding to a constant stream of electronic customer complaints while trying to get 65 drivers (who were paid far better than I was) to do the work of 75 without creating service failures or getting injured. Furthermore, I knew that when I was doing all of this I would probably be doing it alone, since the far better paid supervisors that were supposed to be in charge of solving day-to-

day problems were invariably tied up running their own rat race in the unending pursuit of production numbers. I went from refusing to get dressed on my own time to volunteering to stay late without pay on a regular basis just to make sure my boss's daily production goals were accomplished. I went from inwardly applauding drivers' evasive maneuvers to engaging in a never ending campaign to thwart them, using every coercive technique in the book and then making up a few of my own. My transformation took place despite the fact that I never received a substantial pay increase, or promotion to a higher-statused position, or special recognition, but instead held the same position at the very bottom of the managerial hierarchy my entire time there, on being compensated more than the hourly clerks with little seniority. And I was not alone. I was just one member of a four to five person team of part-time service supervisors, all of whom shared my daily experiences to varying extents and subjected themselves to the same conditions for a similarly meager wage and almost no recognition.

In trying to understand our experiences and what drove my coworkers and I to give of our consent so freely, I delved deeply into sociological analyses of work and class. Instead of answers, all I found was a great dearth of information regarding our understanding of supervisors beyond the traditional view of supervisor as coercive exploiter. It was then that I realized that my experiences, and those of my various coworkers during my time at Trial Shipping, present a very serious problem for the sociological understanding of the role of the supervisor in modern customer service work. Erik Olen Wright does an admirable job of creating a realistic typology of class locations but his theoretical framework lacks empirical grounding and the motivations that drive his supervisory actors do not exist for Trial Shipping's part-time service supervisors



(Wright, 2000). Furthermore, what we know of customer service work and much of the literature on worker consent all focus on the worker's perspective, leaving the supervisor largely out of the equation. We are left wondering why poorly compensated, lower-level supervisors can often be the most vociferous proponents of managerial directives despite the fact that they receive few, if any, traditional incentives. What makes them give it their all, and keep coming back for more?

Despite these shortcomings, there are rays of hope in the existing sociology of work literature. By taking some traditional explanations of worker consent and applying the altered motivations and requirements facing supervisors, it is possible to get a clear idea of what is not responsible for them so willingly giving their consent as well as an idea of what may be behind it. The various concepts of worker identity and their impact on the labor process pioneered by Larry Oulette, Vicki Smith, and Rachel Sherman cannot be directly applied to the part-time service supervisors because their motivations and job requirements are so different, but they provide an essential jumping-off point from which we can theorize about drives the supervisor when monetary gain is not an issue (Oulette, 1994; Smith, 2001; Sherman, 2005). I propose that self identity derived from the successful completion of goals passed down to them by upper management plays a central role in motivating poorly paid, underappreciated workers whose job commands little to no respect. In many ways, this sense of pride and a positive self identity are often the only forms of reward available to these proletarianized supervisory workers. Though their hard work may never be monetarily compensated commensurate with their effort or their sacrifice, at the end of the day they can still walk away from their cramped office knowing that they were once again the unsung heroes who somehow

snatched an impossible victory over production goals from the jaws of failure in spite of every obstacle that was thrown in their way. Perhaps more importantly, much like with the hourly workers in the contemporary work literature, I argue that part-time service supervisors use the rubric by which they judge themselves for evaluating the worth of and value of those around them. With this in mind, I attempt to explain what it means when these aforementioned obstacles that are so cavalierly brushed aside, or ingeniously outwitted, are human beings just trying to finish an honest day's work so they can head home to see their families

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Given the relative scarcity of information that sociologists have regarding lower-level supervisors, it is important to start by confirming what we already know about the modern managerial landscape. Thanks to the work of Sanford Jacoby (2004), we know that the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a time of increasing bureaucratization among American corporations, and that this bureaucratization resulted in the empowering of personnel departments and corporate offices. This empowerment came at a price, however, which was paid by the line managers and foremen in businesses across the economic spectrum. In addition to this upward-migration of managerial power, the economy in general has undertaken a drastic shift in employment from manufacturing work to service-based concerns as Harry Braverman predicted decades ago (Braverman, 1998). These trends represent a true threat to our understanding of modern management, much of which is still grounded in the assumptions borne during the era of Fordist-style production supremacy.

To attempt to gain an understanding of supervisors in an increasingly complex and differentiated economy, it would make sense to start with Erik Olen Wright and his work on contradictory locations within class relations (Giddens and Held, 1982). He developed his theory of contradictory class locations in response to the realization that, within modern capitalism, the simple labels of ‘proletariat’ and ‘bourgeoisie’ are no longer sufficient to describe a growing number of middle managers and entrepreneurs who hold positions that fall somewhere between being the outright owners of capital and

the powerless workers who have nothing to fall back on but the sale of their labor. He even mentions the foreman, a form of lower-level shop floor manager, as belonging to one of these contradictory class locations because “Foremen typically have little real control over the physical means of production, and while they do exercise control over labour power, this frequently does not extend much beyond being the formal transmission belt for orders from above.” (Giddens and Held, 1982) From a theoretical perspective this truly is a revelation, in that it helps lay the groundwork for a much more nuanced study of capitalist classes and organizations. However, without a detailed, empirical study of supervisors we are left with nothing but theory to guide our understanding of a class location that is integral to the operation of modern capitalism and has an impact on workers everywhere. We are left without a feeling for what it actually means to be a member of a contradictory class location. What kind of pressures are members of contradictory class locations faced with, and why do they consent to their jobs so readily in the face of meager compensation and an almost total lack of authority? Finally, Wright leaves us wondering what it means for the hourly workers being managed to be supervised by members of a contradictory location within class relations.

In order to fill this empirical gap left by Wright’s theoretical framework, we must turn to the more grounded case studies in the sociology of work literature. Since we are primarily concerned with more modern, customer service based workplaces, the more recent literature on customer service work produced by scholars like Robin Leidner and Arlie Hochschild are the best places to start. In what could be considered the seminal study of workers employed in the customer service industry, *Fast Food, Fast Talk*, Leidner posited the idea of ‘interest alignments’ existing among the three different

workplace power structures: workers, managers, and customers (Leidner, 1993). The theory behind these alignments is that each of these three parties has power in customer service work and depending on the conditions and company policies, two of the three groups will ally with each other in order to make sure their interests are represented and their voices heard. In *The Managed Heart*, Arlie Hochschild takes a different approach to customer service work when she discusses the ways in which a worker's emotions are shaped and manipulated by the service work they take part in. After observing flight attendants and the emotional faces and mindsets their position forced them to don, she coined the term 'emotional labor' to describe this emotional manipulation for the sake of one's job. She found that workers who were forced to display false emotions often experienced an estrangement from themselves over the long term. This estrangement was often coupled with the worker experiencing emotive dissonance, causing them to bring their true feelings and the feelings imposed on them by their job more in alignment with each other by actually changing their feelings and personalities to match those called for by their position (Hochschild, 1983). Though Hochschild did discuss how power and status play a role in how emotional labor is imposed upon the worker, neither she nor Leidner focus enough on the role of the supervisor in a customer service setting to provide us with a good idea of the pressures that they face and the factors that motivate them to do things like forge interest alignments or take part in emotional labor.

Because the customer service literature leaves us short on customer service the next logical step would be to turn to the literature on management for answers. Though rare, the contemporary work literature on management that does exist is fairly rich in detail. Good examples of this can be found in Tony Watson's *In Search of Management*,

Robert Jackall's *In Search of Management*, and Rosemary Harris' *Power and Powerlessness in Industry* (Harris 1987; Jackall, 1988; Watson, 1995). Each study places special focus on one aspect of management, be it excellence in management in Watson's book, the moral implications of being a manager in Jackall's, or the pressures placed on supervisors in Harris'. While each gives us an idea of what it means to be a manager in a modern corporation, they all focus on upper management or full-time industrial supervisors, and therefore fall short in regards to explaining the unique situation faced by proletarianized customer service supervisors. Furthermore, they each take the essential issue of managerial consent for granted, providing us with few insights regarding what inspire managers to consent to their working conditions so freely.

In *Managing in the Corporate Interest*, Vicki Smith goes much further toward addressing the issue of supervisors consenting to poor work conditions and inaptly compensated, onerous responsibilities as she documents the experiences of lower-level bank supervisors in a corporation undergoing massive structural changes and financial hardship. Smith finds upper management using mid-level supervisors as scapegoats for larger structural problems while they simultaneously increased the amount of work and level of responsibility that they rest on the shoulders of these supervisors. This speaks to the trends predicted by Braverman and Jacoby, and helps to confirm Harris' earlier findings (Braverman, 1998; Harris, 1987; Jacoby, 2004). She even takes Harris' analysis one step further by attempting to understand the causes behind these supervisors' adoption of company policies, finding that it was related to something she labeled as 'coercive autonomy'. This coercive autonomy, along with 'rewards for results' programs proved to be effective instruments for securing the consent of branch managers and other

mid-level managers within the corporation. These supervisors took opportunities to game the system in order to make their jobs easier or to increase job security (Smith, 1990).

Though unique to the management of work literature, this discussion of consent generated to increase personal profits or improve working conditions has been explored much further in the work literature that actually focuses on workers and not managers. A perfect example of this is Michael Burawoy's *Manufacturing Consent*, where he studied machine shop workers. He found that their consent was secured by the corporation by allowing them to play games on the shop floor that both maintained consistent production on levels and increased worker satisfaction by providing them with the opportunity and the circumstances necessary to be distracted by adhering to intricate rules of the games they developed. They were allowed to feel like they were playing the system and to think that they were winning by maximizing their own profit/work ratio, even when winning meant that the corporation was able to maximize its own profits.

These sorts of games played by Burawoy's shop floor workers and Smith's bank managers provide us with an important clue about how lower-level supervisors' consent may be secured, but they do not provide us with a definitive answer. In each instance, the workers are manipulating their work environment in order to improve their profitability or job security. This still leaves us wondering how consent is derived from supervisors that are not paid on a piecework system and do not have the autonomy or power to increase their job security or make their jobs easier through game playing. When there is little or no additional profit to be had, and gameplay actually increases the difficulty of a supervisor's job, why do they persist?

The management literature clearly falls short here, as does much of the literature on workers. Yet there are still other theorists who attribute consent not to games of profitability, but to a sense of positive identity or self worth that comes from the feelings generated by doing a job well. One of the first instances of this is can be seen in Donald Roy's work in the same machine shop that Burawoy would examine decades later. Though not naming it specifically, Roy pondered whether some instances of 'making out' were motivated simply by the satisfaction of having done a good job (Roy, 1953). This phenomenon has been expanded upon greatly over the past two decades in a wide variety of workplaces, from the truckers in Lawrence Ouellet's *Pedal to the Metal* to the hotel workers in Rachel Sherman's *Class Acts* (Ouellet, 1994; Sherman, 2007). Vicki Smith even addresses this in her work on white collar temps, *Crossing the Great Divide* (Smith, 2001). In *Pedal to the Metal*, Ouellet's "super truckers" help us realize the power behind being motivated not by material gain in and of itself, but by the perceived prestige and self-worth that comes with being widely recognized as a capable and proficient trucker that can handle a wide range of occupational circumstances (Ouellet, 1994). His analysis provides us with a ray of hope in the quest to understand why low-level supervisors might give it their all when there are no obvious intrinsic rewards for their efforts. It still leaves something to be desired, though, because the image of the super trucker is, in a way, everything that the low-level supervisor is not. The super trucker is the rebel, the autonomous worker that continually wrangles with management over privileges and perks. Lower-level supervisors, on the other hand, must take on the opposite role simply because success as a supervisor is inherently aligned with achieving the goals of the class to which they (sometimes loosely) belong. While they may strive for autonomy,



supervisory success is diametrically opposed to the interests of workers like the super truckers, who wish to resist managerial authority and gain perks for themselves and not necessarily the corporation.

Rachel Sherman found similar instances of job performance being closely linked to worker self-image when she studied luxury hotel workers and their interactions with guests. She found that the workers created symbolic hierarchies based loosely on their job requirements and social status, and then used these symbolic hierarchies to judge the value and worth of the people they were charged with serving. In doing so they not only justified their own class positions, but justified the entire class structure in which they found themselves (Sherman, 2005). When studying white collar temps, Vicki Smith noticed a similar trend. She found many of them creating a sort of straw man out of all of the negative stereotypes and traits that a 'bad' temporary worker may exhibit. Using this straw man as an example of what not to be, they affirmed themselves to be hard workers, and therefore good people, by distancing themselves from the stereotypically bad temp as much as possible. They even went one step further, blaming negative things that happened in the office on the possibility that a bad temp was responsible, as though trouble-making and sloth were in their nature. In both instances these low-wage workers created a positive self image by adhering to the norms and directives of the corporation and in doing so, unwittingly assisted in reaffirming the social structure to which they belonged. As with Ouellet's truckers, these workers occupy very different class positions than lower-level supervisors, and are faced with a very different set of job requirements. Yet these cases provide compelling evidence that there is more to consent than game

playing and monetary incentives, and help to provide clues to understanding what drives lower-level supervisors.

Having surveyed the most salient and illustrative examples of the sociological literature on customer service work, management, and consent, it is clear that the only way to put these pieces together to form a cogent understanding of low-level customer service supervisors is to go into the field with the express purpose of understanding the nature of the modern customer service supervisor's job. Doing so is the only chance we have to gain a realization of what causes them to consent to a job that is often short on compensation but long on difficulties. Only in doing this can we truly understand the modern workplace, and what all of this means for the much larger group workers that these supervisors are charged with rallying to the corporation's cause even though it is often not in their best interests or those of their workers.

## METHODS

For the purposes of trying to understand modern industry in transition, Trial Shipping Service provides an almost perfect case study. Trial Shipping Service is a well-established international shipping and logistics company based in the United States. Though constantly buffeted by the competitive forces facing any modern corporation, Trial Shipping Service remains profitable year after year and is consistently ranked favorably among other large corporations in the Fortune 500. It employs a massive workforce that includes a large base of both full- and part-time employees governed by a bureaucratically-organized, strictly hierarchical managerial corps. The primary focus of Trial Shipping's business model revolves around the physical moving of packages from one location to another, but in recent decades they have identified the global shift to an emphasis on customer service. As a result, they have shifted much of their focus to implementing new corporation-wide initiatives and services (such as logistics services and inventory software) in order to stay competitive. In addition to a long history of consistent growth and profitability, Trial Shipping has developed a reputation for being a "great place to work" by offering job security, relatively good wages, and health benefits to both its unionized and salaried workforce. As a result of all of these factors, Trial Shipping is a favorite of business publications' "Best Companies to Work For" awards year-in and year-out, and is widely recognized by the general population as being good place to find a desirable job. In essence, it is what every company hopes to be.

Financially successful, relatively prestigious, focused yet diversified, and large enough to be a major player in the global marketplace.

My career with Trial Shipping Service, and ensuing research interests, began with a stroke of luck while I was working towards my bachelors degree. With the help of a corporate referral given by a friend of the family who happened to work in the human resources department, I was able to bypass the traditional promotional process and move directly into a supervisory position. Starting in May of 2002, I began working in one of Trial Shipping's 'extended hubs' as a part-time supervisor. This particular extended hub dispatched anywhere from 65-80 full-time delivery drivers on a daily basis in addition to dozens of part-time loaders and unloaders, 12-15 other part-time supervisors, four full-time supervisors, and a center manager. The title I and my fellow part-time office supervisors were given underwent least two official changes in the time I was there, so for simplicity's sake I will refer to this position as part-time service supervisor.

I began my career at Trial Shipping for the express purpose of earning enough money to support myself through graduation. Like many others, I had heard that it was a great company to work for and was looking forward to the stability that came with a fixed schedule and a fixed monthly income. Despite starting out with no specific research interest in mind, it did not take me long to realize that I was sitting on a veritable cornucopia of data relating to work and organizations, specifically in regards to the interaction of supervisors and their interactions with their workers and their own managers. I also came to realize that the constant addition of customers to this already complex power relationship stew was creating something that I had never seen before in my undergraduate studies. With this in mind I began making much more focused

observations of what was going on around me and what I was actually taking part in as a supervisor. I transformed myself from participant to participant observer, making a mental register of my own feelings and the expressed feelings of other workers and supervisors while recording as much information as I had time to in the form of notes that I wrote or typed in the moments that I found myself alone and not answering multiple phone calls at once. This period of participant observation went on for over five years, until August 2007, when I resigned in order to attend graduate school. After months of reflection and research regarding what I experienced as a part-time service supervisor, I began performing interviews of former coworkers both in person and over the telephone. I interviewed 14 former coworkers from various levels within the TS hierarchy: one Division Manager (one level above Center Manager, oversees a number of individual hubs), one full-time supervisor, two part-time loader supervisors, two safety supervisors, four part-time service supervisors, three full-time drivers, and one full-time hourly shop mechanic who interacts with all levels of management. These interviews provided me with nearly 28 hours of additional firsthand accounts from people who either have extensive experience as a part-time customer service supervisor or have extensive experience working closely with one. The respondents were not just chosen for their occupational proximity to the position of customer service supervisor, but also based on my knowledge of their personality and my prediction of their likelihood to fully and honestly answer questions that I posed to them. Each respondent was assured of total anonymity and confidentiality regarding any information shared, and the nature of the data gleaned from each interview combined with the relatively long duration of each

interview leads me to believe that each respondent answered the interview questions as completely and honestly as could be expected.

## RESULTS

### STRESS AND THE NATURE OF PART-TIME SUPERVISION

#### On the Origins of the Part-Time Service Supervisor

Jacoby (1985) saw the weakening of the foreman in the face of increased control by upper management and a solidification of the gains made by labor unions. Yet the weakened post-WWII foremen he described bear a closer resemblance to omnipotent dictators when compared to some of the supervisory positions invented by modern management. Because we are dealing with a species of supervisor cultured in the petri dish of a modern, more service-oriented corporation, it is important to determine what it means to be a part-time service supervisor and what compels them to consent to their working conditions. In order to understand what drives them, we must first understand what it is that they actually do on a day-to-day basis and where they sit within Trial Shipping's complex corporate hierarchy.

Though technically classified as supervisors, the part-time service supervisor belongs to the lowest possible level of management that exists within the company. According to a number of supervisors I spoke to, the this position was created in response to a decision by upper management that the driver supervisors (the lowest level of full-time supervision in the operations section) were "wasting their time" by sitting in an office responding to customer problems and arranging solutions to pickup and delivery problems that arise from fluctuations in driver workloads. Sending these full-time supervisors out to spend more time monitoring or instructing the drivers in person left a

void in the offices of Trial Shipping hubs across the country. To fill this void, center managers first turned to hourly clerks to handle the phones and dispatch drivers on-the-fly. This system was short-lived, however, as these same managers quickly realized that they needed someone on the phones with enough authority to issue directives to the hourly drivers, but not enough authority to warrant the salary and stock options that traditional full-time driver supervisors garnered. As a result, they created a position that was intended to work hours similar to that of a clerk, but with a nominally higher status and pay that was higher than that of a first year clerk, but lower than one that had four to five years of seniority built up. This meant that in some cases, being promoted from clerk to part-time supervisor required a step down in pay, as was the case for a hazardous materials safety clerk that was transferred to work in our office. Part-time service supervisors are eligible for the same health benefits that full-time supervisors are, but these are nearly identical to the ones enjoyed by the clerks that they replaced as well. Because they are salaried employees, all part-time supervisors receive an annual Christmas bonus check equivalent to ½ of a monthly paycheck, but are excluded from membership in the graduated stock bonuses that all other levels of management enjoyed, making these proletarianized supervisors much more affordable to employ. Over time this employment model was expanded, and part-time supervisors were placed in an ever-growing range of positions where upper management felt an hourly clerk “couldn’t be trusted”, as the center manager once explained to me.

Upper management’s view of the trustworthiness inherently associated with being a part-time supervisor, contrasted with the relatively meager compensation that accompanies it, speaks volumes about the way that this position truly is situated with



“one foot in the bourgeoisie and one foot in the proletariat” (Wright, 1986). As Wright predicted would happen, these part-time supervisors shared structural characteristics with both capital and the worker. The pay rate closely resembled that of an hourly part-time clerk with some seniority, but pay was disbursed in the same increments and on the same time frame as that of a full-time supervisor. When I first began my tenure there, the part-time service supervisor staff was not eligible for overtime pay because of its status as a salaried employee, but after a few years this system changed due to what was described to me by upper management as rampant exploitation of the part-time supervisor pool. The result was an overtime rate of 1.10% for hours worked between 27.5 and 40 per week, and 1.5% for any time above that. This contrasted sharply with the more generous rate of 1.5% that clerks made for time worked over 25 or drivers made for working over 40 hours per week. Even more similar than the wages were the tuition reimbursement plans and paid vacation schedule. Granted, full-time supervisors shared many of these aspects in common with the hourly workers as well, but were paid three to four times as much as the part-time supervisors, and received stock bonuses as well, which served to place them in a position much closer to the owners of capital. Without these, there was little to distinguish the part-time service supervisors from the hourly clerk save for one thing: the actual positioning of their class position as being on the side of capital, by the owners of capital. These part-time supervisors are the logical conclusion of the drive to proletarianize the middle-management workforce resulting from the need to cut operations costs wherever necessary while still maintaining control of the workforce. As an indication that this supervisory proletarianization is an ongoing process, Trial Shipping was continually expanding its use of part-time supervisors throughout its

operations division. What we are left to discover is why a supervisor whose job shares so many traits with the jobs of hourly workers would wholeheartedly agree to play their hearts out for the other team.

### Making it Happen

A plaque featured prominently on the center manager's desk for years (and probably still there) had the name of our district followed by "Make it Happen, Make it Fun". While we could dwell on the implications of this quote, it might be more important to first understand what it means for the part-time service supervisor to "make it happen", and what they were making happen in the first place. Could it be that they consented to their working conditions and class location simply because the job itself was relatively easy?

The primary responsibility of the part-time service supervisor was to have a positive impact on Trial Shipping Services Balanced Scoreboard. While this sounds straightforward at first, it becomes vastly more complicated when one realizes that the Balanced Scoreboard includes every measure of operational performance for Trial Shipping Service. Each element of the Balanced Scoreboard is a measurement of some aspect that is tied into the profitability of the company, ranging from number of deliveries a driver makes in an hour or number of drivers logging excessive overtime to the number of customer complaints that go unresolved or the percentage of customer insurance claims are unresolved, and therefore paid out, in a given month. It even includes elements calculating the turnover rate for hourly workers and the number and type of accidents and injuries, all of which take a bite out of Trial Shipping's bottom line. There are literally hundreds of elements that make up the entire Balanced Scoreboard, and each

individual building is judged based on a score that is determined by weighting individual elements according to the monthly or quarterly goals of the company, and adding all of the scores together. In addition to each supervisor being held accountable for the overall performance of the building, they are also held accountable for the building's scores on elements that they have more of an influence over. They are given certain goals, calculated by the corporate office, that they are supposed to meet each week, and at the end of the year their raise for the next year is calculated largely on the building's performance overall and the performance of their specific areas. For the full-time supervisors, center managers, and certain part-time load supervisors, failing to meet these goals results in reprimands by higher levels of management either on a person-to-person basis, over district-wide e-mail broadcast, or via conference call. This provided incredible motivation for these supervisors to 'make their numbers' by any means necessary, to the extent that a district manager was once telling me about the unorthodox practices of one of his center managers and ended his story with "but as long as he makes his numbers, I don't care how he does it."

Though part-time service supervisors are assigned responsibility for certain specific measures, this assignment is often arbitrary and loosely adhered to. At one performance review I was told that I was accountable for a certain list of elements "even though as a part-time service supervisor you have an effect on almost all of them." As opposed to the supervisors that made executive decisions about driver dispatch or the number of loaders to assign to a truck, the part-time service supervisors were considered to be a support staff to the other management teams. This lack of power did make accountability on certain items, such as driver overtime, much more difficult to

reprimand a part-time service supervisor over in some circumstances, but the wide-ranging nature of this responsibility made this supporting role a double-edged blade. This became especially apparent during the second of two official training sessions we received in my five years on the job. During one of the sessions Jim, the district training supervisor, was informing us of our role in the company (despite the fact that everyone in the class had worked for the company for at least four years at this point). “Everything you do as a part-time service supervisor affects the Balanced Scoreboard. Everything.” Dolly, one of the other supervisors in the class, jokingly responded “So when I go to the bathroom I have an effect on the Balanced Scoreboard!?” We all laughed, and Jim responded “Well yes, even going to the bathroom does, because if you spend a lot of time there or go to the bathroom often that’s time that you can’t answer the phones or work on claims. Same thing if you are in there making personal phone calls, or surfing the internet. All of those things can affect the Balanced Scoreboard and hurt your center’s numbers. *Everything you do* has an effect on the Balanced Scoreboard.” It was essentially his way of repackaging the old fast-food restaurant adage “If there’s time to lean, there’s time to clean”, but the devil is in the packaging. Instead of simply trying to browbeat us into working harder, he was informing us - as colleagues - that we had the power to influence our center’s numbers in everything we do, and that we should keep this power in mind in our day-to-day activities. And unlike the worker who is berated and walks away sulking, there were no acidic remarks or backbiting from our group. After the session was over there were some lighthearted quips whenever someone took a personal phone call, but they were devoid of any acerbity or bitterness. These comments

bore the tone of workers who already knew the weight and breadth of their responsibility, and had long ago embraced the role that they played in keeping Trial Shipping running.

#### Technology, Training, and the Part-Time Supervisor

This was evident not just in how other supervisors referred to the part-time service supervisor (“man of many hats”), but in how they referred to themselves. The most popular label placed on, and continually touted by, these supervisors was that of the “go-to person”. They took turns sitting in the main office of the shipping center from 5am until 11pm (though sometimes much, much later) attending to a wide range of tasks that kept the center in compliance with various other parts of the company. Some of these tasks were permanent, such as keeping a calculating a running tally of the amount of fuel that each truck consumed and matching the building’s tally up with that of the nationwide database, or verifying the absolute accuracy of every hourly workers’ electronic timecard on a daily basis before submitting it to the human resources database. These tasks also included jobs like verifying the successful completion of special pickups and deliveries or investigating the dozens upon dozens of customer insurance claims that flooded the building every week to see if these people received their shipments and uncover what went wrong if they didn’t. Some supervisors were even in charge of safety compliance for the building, ensuring that every employee had been trained on the pertinent safety procedures and filing reports on employees following any accidents or injuries, along with any retraining that was necessary. Other tasks would come and go. For instance, Trial Shipping’s sales department sets up special arrangements with various shippers in order to win their business, and these often included the driver performing a specialized task when making the delivery, or bringing packages to a specific location.

As these accounts were usually high-value accounts, the part-time service supervisors were in charge of tracking each delivery or pickup to verify that all special precautions were followed, completing a log with all of the necessary information, and then faxing the log to the corporate office each day. These are just a handful of examples of the tasks that these supervisors were charged with on a daily basis, but they are fairly illustrative of variegated nature of the bureaucratic side of the job.

Though seemingly innocuous, these tasks often carried with them any number of hidden difficulties that could turn something like a standard electronic filing job into a nightmare. One part-time service supervisor, Becky, that was in charge of coding, inputting, and coordinating electronic worker timecards with the national payroll computer tells the story of months that she spent wrestling with a new type of payroll software that the corporate office had recently implemented. She mentioned that she was getting in trouble for working past the 5.5 hours per day that she was supposed to since supervisor overtime was one element of the Balanced Scoreboard that upper management was dinged for. This task was supposed to be performed from 8:00pm until 10:00pm every night, and was supposed to be the last thing she did before she went home for the day, but she was staying until 12:30am, 1am, and sometimes much later to try to complete the building's payroll. When I asked her what was keeping her so late, she explained the problem to me.

**Becky:** It was just the codes that they were using, the codes were completely different. Totally and completely different. It had nothing to do with the speed, just the codes. Knowing what the codes were...

**Jonathan Vaughn:** So you guys didn't know what the codes were when they first started it?

**Becky:** The codes were different, the driver codes were different, the drivers were putting one thing in their boards and we had to go and correct that, uhm, when you would put something in it would reject it. The whole system was just bad, just completely bad.

And they're tweaking everything now, every, every week they do an upgrade on that system. Every week it's something new. But they don't tell you that they're doing this upgrade.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** They don't ever tell you?

**Becky:** No, so we have to find out after the fact.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** Who do you find out from?

**Becky:** Who do you find out from? When it's bad. When you're doing something that you've been doing all week and the next week you come in and you're doing the same thing and you, and you know, click "Go" and you find out "Oh well that's an error..." Well why is that an error all of a sudden when you've been doing it? Then you have to make a call and find out "Well why is this an error?". "Oh we changed that." So they do that every week.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** Wow...

**Becky:** So... that's what I go through. And then I have to go back and correct it for the week, and it's just a pain in the butt. But see, Trial Shipping Service has always been that way....they do stuff, they they implement new codes, new things for you to do, but they don't tell you until after the fact. They'll send you an e-mail like, two weeks later, to let you know that they've done this.

Here Becky provides us with an excellent example of how a standard procedure can turn into frustration nightmare with little or no notice, and can take months to resolve. The problems she experienced with this program began in early summer and still had not been resolved by Christmas of that same year.

Becky's situation brings to light another issue faced by part-time service supervisors: namely, an almost total lack of training or knowledge of job requirements. During the five plus years that I worked there, I was only exposed to two formal job training sessions. Both were administered years after I had been working as part-time service supervisor. My coworkers who had been doing the job for 10 years or more at that point said that these were the first instances of formal training they had received as well. While this job required quite a bit of troubleshooting and on-the-job training, this dearth of formal training hints at the lack of emphasis that Trial Shipping put on providing these supervisors with adequate information to complete the job. In fact, this lack of adequate training or information was so endemic that Trial Shipping attempted to

address it by adjusting the job requirements of the part-time service supervisors. The memo sent to all supervisors regarding these changes appears to address this problem:

In surveys taken in 2004, the (part-time service supervisor) workforce said that they did not have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and had very little training. In addition, these surveys told us that the (part-time service supervisors) were not treated as management people but mostly as administrative assistants.....In order to address the responsibilities issue, the (Checklist Procedure) was developed....The purpose of the application is to ensure that key center tasks are assigned and accounted for by someone throughout the business day.... You are responsible for each task listed in the system that is assigned to you. When a task is completed, you should check it off. Tasks should be checked off as they are completed throughout the day. This checkmark is your signature that the task has been completed. **If you do not complete a task, then do NOT check the task as complete.** (Correspondence from Trial Shipping Upper Management)

At first blush this looks like the work of a responsive company addressing the concerns of its hard-working supervisory team. However, the way that this checklist procedure was actually implemented could not have had a more dysfunctional result, as Nell so clearly illustrates.

**Nell:** The hot item right now is making sure that you do that checklist.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** The checklist, uhm, the (part-time supervisor job completion checklist)?

**Nell:** Riiight. Yeah, they're , they're really hot on that. You know everybody wants to be 100%

**Jonathan Vaughn:** Ok.

**Nell:** So... and you know Dolly's not there so Randy (the part-time a.m. dispatch supervisor)... stepped into Dolly's job, but Randy is still Dolly right now because they haven't changed his name, and he has no idea how to check that list off so I'm checking it off for him every day.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** Did they ever, they never showed him how to do the list?

**Nell:** Well we've not had time! Absolutely have not had time.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** Well whose job is it to show him, I guess it's Matt's (full-time a.m. dispatch supervisor and Randy's boss), right?

**Nell:** Well, Matt probably don't know, he just knows he needs to be 100% every day. And if he's not, he lets me know about it! "We're not 100%, we're 75!!!"

**Jonathan Vaughn:** So they go to Matt if you're not 100%, and...

**Nell:** Well, I think each supervisor, or maybe it is just Matt, you know, and then John (center manager) uhm, you know, keeps up with the part-time service supervisors and then Randy's pretty much like Matt's employee.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** So I guess because Matt's employee didn't do it, Matt comes to you. They go to Matt and Matt comes to you.

**Nell:** Well yeah, he'll go, "Why wasn't it checked off?" – "Probably because he doesn't know how" or "I wasn't here yesterday Matt, I wasn't here to check off, you know."



**Jonathan Vaughn:** And nobody knows that if you're not there that they have to do Randy and you...

**Nell:** Right.

.....

**Jonathan Vaughn:** So they're really riding you guys on the checklist?

**Nell:** Yeah, the checklist... it's just whatever the hot commodity happens to be. you know, whatever. You know, next month it may be... uh... well "Why weren't all the (driver communication computers) downloaded?", or you know it may be claims, you know "We really need to work on claims..." you know, and then sales leads are a big thing right now. They've been a big thing for probably six or eight months...

**Jonathan Vaughn:** Ok.

**Nell:** Uhm... Our center is the only center in the area that's even close to 75%, and if we hit 75% everybody in the building gets a watch.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** Ohhh!

**Nell:** Some type of really nice watch.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** Really?! You guys are the only ones, huh?

**Nell:** That's what, uh, Wilson said, I think, Thursday.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** Wow.

**Nell:** I know I turned in two for Adam the other morning and I have another potential, you know, sales lead.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** So 75% of the drivers turning in a sales lead, you think?

**Nell:** Uhm... I think it's just se...75%... a 75% turn-in rate from everybody...

This exchange speaks volumes about the experiences faced by the part-time service supervisors on a daily basis. A procedure created as a response to some of the problems they face actually ends up creating more problems and more bureaucratic, 'administrative assistant'-style chores, as well as all of the threats of punitive repercussions and headaches that come with them. Nell begins by mentioning 'the hot item', referring to the element of the Balanced Scoreboard that corporate is emphasizing this particular month. In this instance, it is a checklist on an internal website that is made up of hundreds of tasks that a part-time service supervisor is supposed to do. When it was introduced, this list of items was divided up amongst all of the service supervisors in the building and customized electronically, so when we each log in to the internal site it brings it up. Everyone's list contained a number of items that did not apply to them or their job, and in some instances that they had never even heard of before, but because the

actual completion of the checklist was an element of the Balanced Scoreboard itself, each item had to be assigned to someone to get checked off every day. Since there were four people with checklists at this time, noncompletion by one person would lead to a 75% completion rate, which would result in the district manager getting in touch with the center manager, John, and scolding him the next day. While this sounds rational enough so far, Nell depicts quite clearly how problematic this checklist system is. Despite being replaced by Randy six months prior, Dolly's name was still in the checklist system as working there, and as being responsible for checking all of her duties off every day since her replacement was never taught how to access the system in the first place. Rather than one of the full-time supervisors simply putting Randy's name on the checklist, or at least training him how to complete Dolly's (which was made up of tasks that were his now), they called on Nell. That Nell reiterates two excuses for why she could not complete the checklist, saying that she was not there, reminding him that his employee did not know how to do his own work, in a tired-sounding voice makes it quite clear that this is a problem that she runs into enough that she has a number of scripts to choose from. What is even more interesting is her response when I ask her why no one has trained Randy on how to do his job and she responds "Well we've not had the time!", as if training one of her coworkers was at least partly her responsibility and not the job of that employee's boss, or the center manager who oversees everything. As a hint that this poor flow of information and training is not an isolated incident, when I spoke to Dolly and asked her how her job in the new center was going after six months, her response to me was "I feel like I'm under 20 feet of water trying to get up... trying to learn this job".

Customers and the Part-Time Supervisor

Despite the influential role that this ‘office work’ often played in the day-to-day lives of the part-time service supervisor, these tasks were often viewed as ancillary chores that they saw as getting in the way of doing their real jobs: helping customers and directing drivers. The part-time service supervisor office was roughly 12’ by 10’, with the longer walls lined by formica countertops resting on filing cabinets. Each wall had two computers and two telephones, with all four phones having access to four land lines and each computer running a customer complaint delivery program. This software delivered a nearly constant stream of delivery modification requests and customer complaints, most of which required a nearly immediate response of some. The problems raised by these complaints come in all shapes and colors, such as a company needing you to update their shipper information in Trial Shipping’s database, a driver mishandling a package, a package’s contents being lost or stolen, or even something as drastic as a driver allegedly running a customer off the road. The more severe complaints are tallied as an element on the Balanced Scorebook, as are instances involving a part-time service supervisor’s failure to respond to customer complaints in a timely manner. If the part-time service supervisor does not call the customer back within an hour, and the customer makes a second complaint, it generates another Distress that is classified as a supervisor error, and not only counts against the whole center but against the part-time service supervisor personally. On a daily basis, the center I worked for received anywhere from 25-75 package modification instructions, 13-35 urgent complaints, and zero to five severe complaints, depending on the time of year and the number of driver mistakes that day.

In addition to dealing with a steady stream these sorts of customer e-mails, the part-time service supervisor is also in charge of answering up to four telephone lines at

once. Depending on the time of day, and whether or not anyone is sick or on vacation, there are either one or two supervisors watching these phones. During the busy periods of the day that results in each supervisor dealing with anywhere from one to four telephone calls at a time. Almost every phone call can be classified as one of three things: 1. A driver with a problem, either having gotten into an accident or needing help to finish his job, 2. A customer needing a driver to perform an extra task, either make another delivery attempt or make an extra pickup, or 3. A customer with a lost package that needs a service supervisor's help locating it. It falls on the shoulders of the part-time service supervisor to try to craft solutions to the problems presented by this steady stream of calls while making sure that their solutions do not cause ripples in the drivers' schedules that would result in them not being able to 'make their numbers', and thereby hurting the center's Balanced Scorebook. It is here that Jim the Corporate Trainer's saying 'everything you do affects the Balanced Scorebook' truly hits home. It is with this idea in mind that each part-time service supervisor continually makes decisions on the fly while trying to walk the fine line between providing assistance and continually increasing driver efficiency. If he or she sends Ralph to help Philip it decreases the likelihood that Philip will miss delivery stops, but it will hurt Ralph's stops per hour and miles driven numbers, as well as adding him to the list of drivers with excessive overtime and the list of drivers who veered outside of their computer-generated boundaries. Since each of these factors is an element that makes up the larger Balanced Scoreboard, and each element carries a different weight depending on the corporate office's emphasis that month, the solution is never cut and dry. The part-time service supervisors have to judge whether or not a customer is bluffing when they threaten to call in a corporate complaint

if the driver is not sent back to make another service attempt, and, if they are not bluffing, whether that corporate complaint would besmirch the building more than having another driver added to the excessive overtime list because he was sent back to a previous stop. Unless a higher-level manager can be located immediately, it comes down to the part-time service supervisor to quickly perform the managerial calculus in their head to ‘make a smart business decision’, and then cross their fingers in the hopes that they sacrificed an element that was not the new ‘hot topic’ of the month. This bureaucratic Russian roulette is almost unanimously considered to be the meat and potatoes of the part-time service supervisor’s job, as these sorts of problems continually pop up and require immediate attention throughout the shift.

While trying to balance these competing needs and requests was difficult, it was made all the more difficult by the fact that the driver dispatch levels were decided by the corporate office each day. They would forecast the amount of packages that each building would get, calculate the number of drivers that building should have, and phone it in to us. Since labor costs were so high, these numbers were naturally on the lean side far more often than not. As a result, each day there would be between five and 20 drivers asking for assistance in order to complete their work, with the other drivers having a full day’s work themselves. When they called, they talked to the part-time service supervisor. Since there were many days where these were the only supervisor left in the building when problems arose, it often fell on that part-time supervisor’s shoulders to find a way to cobble together an overly-extended dispatch well enough that no business pickups or deliveries would get skipped, which would generate a Distress and a number of dings on the Balanced Scoreboard. The part-time customer service supervisor frequently inherited

the duties of two to three full-time supervisors, with little or no backup. This happened so often, in fact, that I was once talking to the full-time morning dispatch supervisor, who was in charge of creating a dispatch that did not require shifting drivers all over the map to ensure that all of the work was completed.

**Matt:** “We’re running too lean today. I wish they would just let me put the right amount of drivers out there to get the job done.”

**Jonathan Vaughn:** “Yeah, that would make our jobs a whole lot easier.”

**Matt:** “Well, you wouldn’t have a job.”

This was startling to me at the time, not just because Matt was so forthcoming about the fact that the job of making the daily dispatch actually work fell on the shoulders of the part-timers, but because the numbers passed down by corporate had become so unattainable that full-time managers were openly admitting it.

This situation was made even worse by the fact that the part-time service supervisors were rarely given assistance by the upper level supervisors, despite often being forced to help manage their drivers. They were very often left alone to deal with a constant stream of driver problems and customer problems in addition to the multiple headaches that arose from trying to complete their more simple daily office tasks. While I was working there I worked with a total of 10 other part-time service supervisors. Of the 10, three left in the first year because they got burnt out, two were fired, and two turned to medication to help deal with stress. Other than myself, only two other part-time service supervisors were both unmedicated and not severely “burnt-out” in some way shape or form. One was fairly new and the other eventually transferred to an early morning part-time supervisor position that did not require dealing with customers. After a year and a half I myself developed a nervous tick in my right eye that would cause it to twitch uncontrollably whenever I got the least bit stressed at home or at work, although

that abated gradually over time. The stress of dealing with four telephones at once was in itself enough to drive these supervisors crazy, as I witnessed on numerous occasions.

When I asked Dolly what it was about being a part-time service supervisor that made her have to switch jobs she said

**Dolly:** It was the volume of calls. If somebody would, if they would've had two (part-time service supervisors) in there all the time, handling the phones, and dealing with everything, it would not probably have affected me the same way.

**Jonathan Vaughn:** You don't think so?

**Dolly:** No, but when you're there by yourself, you know a lot of the times there it was, completely. I mean the (full-time) sups were gone, the manager was gone, you know. So... I think that's really what... if there was somebody there to help field the phone calls, and not just put them on hold, it would've been different.

She mentioned that it was not just being inundated by phone calls and the problems they brought, but the fact that even when other supervisors were there in the building the best they would do to help is answer the phone and 'just put them on hold'. Becky mentioned something similar, saying that she saw her boss, the center manager, "about two hours per week." The rest of the time she was left to make do by herself. Joe, A former part-time service supervisor that went on to be a driver, had the most memorable reply when I asked him if he missed his old job. He simply said "Hell no! Anything is better than answering those damn phones!"

Having established that these supervisors face a job that is fraught with difficulties and that they are forced to deal with any number of problems on a daily basis, how can we tell for sure that they are actively consenting to these conditions, and not just giving the bare minimum required to collect their paycheck? The answer to this question is hinted at throughout my interview transcripts, be it in Nell's doggedly determined, and even proud attempts to pitch in and help the center achieve its vaguely-defined sales lead

goals or in Dolly's continued attempts to teach herself the details of her new job despite the persistent sensation of drowning. However, their commitment to their jobs goes much deeper than this. They continually work extra hours in order to tie up loose ends that they could easily leave for the next supervisor, and often do so for no pay since supervisor overtime is yet another element monitored (and frowned upon) by the corporate office, and can get the center management team in trouble. In the process of juggling various chores, customer complaints, and driver problems that arose throughout the day, they abjured even the most basic of bodily functions in the name of manning their post by the phones. Maria summed up the intensity of the pace these workers kept and their devotion to completing their tasks successfully when she said "you can't even go to the restroom for goodness sakes!" Like bathroom breaks, meal times were often delayed for hours until the relief supervisor showed up to take over. It was not unusual to walk into the office at 2:30 and see half-eaten lunches surrounded by unfinished paperwork. And even when the relief arrived, it was entirely common to find one supervisor tracking the other down in the restroom and asking them an urgent question or telling them that a driver was on the phone and needed to speak with them as quickly as possible.

When asked directly about how they deal with stress, their answers to this fairly simple question implied that they were far more heavily invested in the labor process than someone who was simply trying to collect a paycheck. Each part-time service supervisor I interviewed responded that their coping mechanism involved simply buckling down and working harder until the crisis they were facing had passed. Becky's response to my



question about dealing with a hectic day was representative of a common theme among all of these workers, although somewhat more elaborative.

You go on autopilot. You just have to go on autopilot. And you can't think about it, you just have to do it. It's instinct, you know? You just, just, just... do it. Because if you don't do it, if you sit down and think about it, you start crying. You know, you start crying or screaming or whatever, but you just can't let anything, you know, penetrate that, like put up a shell. You can't let anything penetrate that shell. You just go on autopilot and just, you're like a robot. It's just automatic. You just do... you just answer phones, talk to people, you know, people coming in, they're coming in the door. You're talking to them, you're talking on the phone. You're typing up this, you're doing Bulletins, whatever you need to do, you do it. You just can't let anything penetrate you. You know? And you have to have that smile on your face. My thing is I've got this, I always have this attitude that, no matter what, it can always be worse. So you always got to have that, that, that smile in your heart, in your head, or whatever. It could always be worse, always have a smile on your face Always have a smile on your face, and never stop to think how bad it is.... Just keep going, just keep going nonstop. No matter how bad it gets.

Becky and her coworkers made it very clear that when the going got tough, the part-time service supervisor got going. Sure, there would be phone receivers slammed into their cradles, curses shouted at recently-disconnected customers or drivers, office supplies hurtled across the room, and filing cabinets forcefully kicked, but in almost every occasion this release of steam was simply part of the segue into handling the next problem on the stack.

#### Volunteering Consent or Just Punching the Clock? Games and the Part-Time Supervisor

Their consenting to their working conditions can be seen in the other coping mechanisms they developed, as well. Like Roy and Burawoy's machinists, the part-time service supervisors created games that revolved around the achievement of various goals that were set in place by their bosses, even though, unlike the machinists, there is little or no financial benefit to be had from the successful completion of these games (Burawoy, 1979, Roy, 1953). Sometimes the games revolved around trying to achieve bureaucratic goals, like decreasing the percentage of claims that Trial Shipping will be forced to pay, or investigating the location of a lost package. Quite often, however, the games involved

manipulating the workers themselves. The rules of these games were never formally codified, and most of the time the part-time service supervisors do not even recognize their actions as game playing. However, they engaged in activities that took on all the hallmarks of a shop floor game. One example of a task that turned into a game took place approximately four years ago, when I was working the evening shift during the busy season. It was essential that all drivers return to the building by 9pm so that the material they picked up could be sent to the sorting facility in time to be sorted on schedule. Furthermore, if too many drivers arrived after 8pm, the building would be unable to process what was brought in in a timely manner, resulting in a late departure to the sorting facility. Failing to achieve this goal was absolutely out of the question, as it had resulted in higher-level managers being fired in the past. However, during the busy season this goal was often especially hard to accomplish, as was the case on this particular day. Derrick and I had been shuffling drivers back and forth to help each other out throughout the afternoon, but it soon became clear that there simply were not enough full-time drivers to get all of the work done, and there was no one else left to send to assist them as all of the supervisors were already out doing what they could to help. Earlier that day the morning supervisors had placed three morning workers, whose start time was 3:00am, on the road to assist with the high volume of deliveries during the first half of the day. As the afternoon wore on Derrick and I realized that we had nowhere else to turn, so we requested these drivers that began work at 3am to head out to begin helping certain overloaded drivers. We did so with the permission of the center manager, on the strict condition that these drivers not exceed 15 hours of work (not including their lunch), as that could potentially violate a labor law, bringing almost certain wrath from

the corporate office. Throughout the evening we stayed in constant contact with these drivers, via messages to their handhelds and cellphone calls, making sure that they got just enough work off the drivers they were helping to get the driver in before 9pm, and themselves in before 8pm. As the first two came in and we could look at their official time for the day of 14.7 and 14.85 hours, we were beaming with pride and high fiving each other at the precision with which we had used them. Then we realized that the last one, Stan, was nowhere to be found and it was already after 8pm. On his way in from the last driver he helped we had sent him to meet up with a driver that would be out past 9pm to take his pickup pieces and get them back in time for sorting, but something must have happened. We panicked... the game was up, we had lost! I sent a frantic message to Stan asking where he was, when would he be back? Then suddenly his punch-out time flashed across the screen, 14.97 hours. We were elated, ecstatic. On closer inspection, Stan was 15 minutes late getting to work, meaning that he had until 8:15 until he had to be off the clock as mandated by law (and, more importantly, the corporate office). Derrick's first response was "Thank God Stan was late to work today..." We both laughed and joked about how his screw up saved the day, and I went to find James, the center manager, to tell him the good news. All drivers were in under 15 hours, and all of the pickup pieces would be back in time to be sorted (even if some of the drivers would be out until 9:30 or 10pm). Check Mate.

This essential task of shifting drivers around in order to achieve the building's goals for the day, be it decreasing customer complaints, helping another driver make it back to the building in time, or any number of other scenarios, was more than just part of the job. The shifting of the drivers, and the work that each supervisor put into it, was an

indication of their actively consenting to the labor process in which they found themselves. As I discussed earlier, though their role was nominally supervisory, these part-time service supervisors were at the very bottom rung of the supervisory ladder. As such, they lack power to hire or fire drivers that upper management has, and are held to the stipulations of the union bargaining agreement. Among other things, the union bargain ensures that more senior drivers can defer work to drivers of lesser seniority, that they cannot be forced to do something that they deem to be unsafe, and that they cannot be forced to work excessive over time. These regulations, and the part-time service supervisors' lack of status, results in them having trouble being taken seriously by the drivers and having very few options available to them in regards to instructing drivers to perform various tasks. As a result, these supervisors become the embodiment of a phrase repeated by Jim, the corporate trainer: "Management is the most sincere form of manipulation." Rather than simply throwing up their hands in the face of potential driver opposition, they make their bosses' goals their own and continually strive to find increasingly coercive ways to achieve these goals.

One of the most popular methods involves the use of Hochschild's conceptualization of emotional labor in the employment of what I refer to as the 'honey approach', which is informed by the saying "You win more flies with honey..." (Hochschild, 1983). The part-time service supervisors all stressed the importance of asking drivers politely to 'please help me out', as opposed to simply issuing them an instruction. In fact, Becky regularly chides the newer Maria for her imperious, and usually unsuccessful, manner for dealing with drivers. As was the case with Hochschild's flight attendants, they generally consider it to be much easier to simply

mold their tone and inflection to that of a friendly request rather than express their impatience or displeasure with the driver they are talking to. However, these supervisors go much further than simple emotional labor in their pursuit to secure the consent of the drivers. Through the trading of favors with certain drivers they are able to lay the groundwork for developing friendly relationships. Over time, as these makeshift work friendships strengthen, they are able to use them to their advantage. Eventually, they are not just asking a worker to perform a task, but instead they are asking a friend to help another friend out with a problem. Except really, they are asking that ‘friend’ to take on additional work in the name of patching a hole in the dispatch left by an earlier supervisor, or mandated by driver cuts passed down by the corporate office to the center manager. What started out as a driver doing a supervisor a favor in exchange for possible repayment one day develops into a more advanced form of exploitation, where the drivers who are ‘friendly’ always end up being the first to be called on in a situation where help is needed, and almost always end up having more work foisted upon them than the drivers who were not drawn into this sort of relationship. It is in the performing of this relational labor that we can truly see the most sincere form of manipulation.

This idea of getting the job done no matter what the costs or obstacles was even evident when the part-time service supervisors *did not* do their jobs. Given that their work environment often felt more like an emergency room than a dispatch office, and that they spent each day grappling with real or imagined, yet almost always obscured, priorities from above, they became experts at cutting corners in order to accomplish all of their goals. One of the most salient examples of this involved the company-wide safety and training tests that were circulated among various groups of supervisors throughout

the year. These tests were designed to assure worker compliance with company-wide safety regulations and corporate policies. The problem they posed, however, was that they were often accompanied by expansive training manuals, videos, or computerized training guidebooks that could take hours to learn in addition to taking the tests, which often contained 50-100 questions. Since the part-time service supervisors were already stretched thin, and overtime was almost never authorized to complete this training material, this allowed for very few opportunities to complete these training modules. In an interview, Maria explained that she still had not completed the test for newly hired employees that she had been assigned eight months prior because she simply did not have the time. Because this sort of noncompliance on a safety test would be enough to cost the center dearly on a corporate safety audit and result in punishment for the center management team, the center managers began handing out ‘cheat sheets’ with nearly every test that came down from the corporate office. These cheat sheets made it so that the supervisors did not have to watch the time-consuming training materials or even read the test itself, but simply type in the correct answers and submit it electronically. Again we see a parallel to the games Burawoy found in his machine shop, where upper management takes an active role in facilitating a sort-of game playing in order ensure the achievement of corporate objectives. However, unlike Burawoy’s machinists, the consent garnered by these schemes is not bought with with any sort of economic motivation. In fact, there is an economic *disincentive* to this system for part-time service supervisors, in that coercing them into cheating their way through tests results in their loss of overtime pay.

In addition to their complicity in allowing lower-level managers to cut corners and falsify documentation, upper management actively tried to harness the devotion of the part-time service supervisors to their jobs to help further their business goals. Each supervisor has their own stories of times that they have been called up to help pitch in by working extra shifts or take on an extra task. Though it is almost always presented to the supervisor as a request for a favor, different supervisors view these situations differently. For some it involves being asked to work a few extra hours while someone is on vacation, while for others it can mean a petition to work double the normal number of shifts for anywhere from four to six weeks. This was most common during the busy season, when an extra supervisor was required to help with the extra drivers on the road. Though responses to these requests by the center management team varied, they were almost always met with acquiescence. While these instances sometimes provided one of the few opportunities to earn the 110% overtime pay rate, the possibility of additional pay does not entirely explain the widespread acquiescence of the part-time supervisors. Dolly even described this process of being requested to work extra hours as being taken advantage of, and said “they know they’ve got somebody that cares, and is going to work and do the job, so why wouldn’t they (take advantage of the part-time service supervisor) ?” In fact, Dolly, Maria, Becky, and Nell all were very adamant in their belief taking on extra hours and doing their job on a full-time scale was incredibly taxing, and impossible to do over the long term no matter what the pay. I share this opinion, as the instances when I agreed to work eight to nine hours a day for weeks on end stand out in my mind as some of the most taxing of any career I have had thus far. My most lasting memories from doing these occasions involved the hours I spent laying down on the first flat

surface I could find the minute I walked in the door after arriving home, utterly exhausted from dealing with so many demands for such an extended period of time.

## IDENTITY AND CONSENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUPERVISORS AND WORKERS

### Pride and the Part-Time Supervisor

Having attempted to paint as clear a picture as possible of what it means to be a proletarianized customer service supervisor, and what consent really means for them as a workforce, we find ourselves still scratching our heads as to why these part-time service supervisors actively consent to these working conditions and readily adopt the goals of their bosses. The most obvious explanation would be that they traded their consent for the compensation provided by the job. Though the compensation was far from stellar, and ranked the part-time service supervisors as some of the lowest-paid employees in the company, it was better than your average entry level service job making a dollar or two over minimum wage. Furthermore, the part-time hours and affordable healthcare benefits made it convenient for parents who wanted to supplement a spouse's income while still helping to shoulder the childcare load. Still, this only explains why they continued to work there and not why they invested so much of themselves in the job, usually at the expense of excess personal time and often their sanity. It was entirely possible to work as a part-time service supervisor without embracing the more common attitude of actively working to achieve upper management's goals without getting fired. During my time at Trial Shipping there were two different supervisors that came through the office who resisted adopting the 'give it all mentality', as witnessed by their reluctance to help out upper management or their part-time service supervisor coworkers. Their tenure was marked by, and remembered for, their willingness to "leave work hanging out", forcing



others to take up their slack, as well as their “I can only do so much, if it doesn’t happen then that’s not my fault” attitude. While this strategy may seem to be a perfectly reasonable response to the pressures they faced, it stood in direct opposition to the rest of the work force’s value system. While this caused them to be poorly-regarded by their coworkers or upper management, Trial Shipping’s policies on firing management personnel required a serious breach of managerial protocol or ethical standards before grounds for termination could be established. Hence, they were allowed to continue working there right up until one of them had a romantic relationship with a driver and the other got in a physical altercation with a clerk while at work. Any illusions that working oneself to the bone was a requirement for keeping that job disappeared with the persistence of these employees despite their relatively lackadaisical performance, yet the workers around them continued to devote themselves to meeting the goals set before them by the corporate office with the same fervor as ever. In fact, the other part-time service supervisors actually worked harder in the presence of these less motivated workers because they believed strongly that the work simply “had to get done”, even if it meant them sacrificing to cover for a shirker.

Another possibility is that these supervisors worked as hard as they did because their status as a member of the management team rewarded them with a motivating sense of authority. However, my field research and interview data indicate just the opposite. A common complaint among part-time service supervisors was that they are not given *enough* authority, and as a result have little or no power to actually enforce rules as a member of management should be able to. Maria’s experience on the job thus far has been fraught with drivers going over her head to their full-time supervisors to have them

countermand her requests, or worse, ignoring her requests altogether. Nell, Becky, and Dolly all mention a lack of any true supervisory power in their position as a part-time service supervisor, and all of these complaints resurface over and over again in the office environment. Of all of the part-time service supervisors I worked with or interviewed, only one, Becky, had ever written a formal disciplinary complaint against a driver, and she had done it years ago in a different building under the guidance of a supportive boss that no longer worked for the company. The drivers they manage look at the part-time service supervisors as nuisances who only create extra work for them to do and slow them down while they are completing their own daily tasks. If the part-time service supervisors took on this job to help fulfill a need for power and authority, they were thoroughly disabused of that notion by the time I met them, yet they soldiered on despite an almost total lack of regard or esteem.

It is true that these supervisors play games at work on a regular basis, whether they recognize them as such or not, but determining that these games generate consent is much more difficult. Unlike Burawoy's machinists and Smith's bankers, these supervisors are not gaming the system, but instead are knowingly volunteering to be star players on the system's team while simultaneously agreeing to collect the bat boy's paycheck (Burawoy, 1979, Smith, 1990). And yet, while this seems almost entirely illogical, if you stop to think about the benefits of being the MVP it begins to become clear. Sure there are the high pay and the prestige, both of which are lacking in the part-time service supervisor job, but there is also something else that is arguably even more important: knowing that you are the superstar. These proletarianized supervisors go out

every day and give it their all because at the end of the day they can walk off the field with a firm belief in the fact that they are not only important, but indispensable.

This pride in their perception of their indispensability truly shone through in each of my interview sessions. When Dolly was describing the kind of information she felt a part-time service supervisor needed to know, she made the comment that “I think the part-time supervisor job is... um... the most important... one of the most important... I don’t want to say *the* most important, but one of the most important jobs (in Trial Shipping’s Operations Division)”. Though she qualified her original statement, her comments are incredibly illustrative of the attitude shared by each of part-time service supervisors. Nell made a similar comment when she was discussing the new center manager’s opinion of the building’s part-time service supervisors when she remarked “I still don’t think he really realizes who his core employees are...”, implying that he did not know enough about his new position to realize just how valuable she and her coworkers were. When discussing a center manager she was almost glowing with pride as she told me “James always said ‘when you and Jon are here, I have nothing to worry about. When either of you are in that office, I know everything will get taken care of.’” That is certainly a compliment that would make anyone feel good, but it was clear that it was especially meaningful to her because it totally reaffirmed her view of herself as reliable, valuable, and ultimately responsible. When asked how she would describe her job to someone that had no idea what a part-time service supervisor does, Becky said “I’m a fix-it. I’m the Mrs. Fix-it Person. I’m the go-to guy. If I had to explain my job... I get things done. If you want something done within Trial Shipping, I get it done. I put fires out... I actually put fires out. That’s what I do.” Not only does she see herself as

being responsible for incredibly urgent problems on a regular basis, but she sees herself as being able to solve any problem when she is on the job. This concept of part-time service supervisor as being a “firefighter” and “go-to person” were repeated by supervisor after supervisor throughout the interview process, and have unmistakable roots in the actual office culture in which these supervisors are enmeshed. In the office it was a regular occurrence for a part-time supervisor or a member of upper management (or both) to be discussing the day and mention that there was an excessive number of “fires” that day. By taking part in these conversations, upper management not only showed that they could empathize with the stress that came part-in-parcel with the job of part-time service supervisor, but also contributed to this self image of importance and responsibility. Even as this recognition contributed to feelings of vindication and appreciation among the supervisors, it also ensured that their consent could be secured by their purportedly grateful bosses. And, as Nell’s pride in the recognition of her dependability implies, the feelings generated by this ongoing dialogue are not just restricted to the shop floor of the Trial Shipping dispatch office, but instead are carried around by these proletarianized supervisors on a day-to-day basis outside of work. This was never so clear to me as it was when I met my wife for dinner one night after a late shift. I was discussing the events of the day and some of the problems I had handled, and when I was done she made the observation that “you make all of your stories sound like you’re saving lives, like you work in an emergency room.” With that she laid bare what I had been entirely blind to for years: a sense of urgency that was so pervasive and seemed to come so naturally that I was entirely unable to recognize it, despite living it on a daily basis.

Like the firefighter, another archetypal figure employed by part-time service supervisors and other full-time supervisors when describing their job was that of the babysitter. In office conversations other supervisors often likened the job to that of running a high-priced nursery or babysitting children, with the implication that the drivers and other part-time hourly workers were the children. Though babysitter may seem like a big step down from something as prestigious as a firefighter, they both have some very important traits in common. They are both positions that imply a high level of responsibility and competence, and they are both jobs that require the job-holder to be able to tackle any number of problems should the need arise. Similarly, all of these terms reflect deeply-rooted views of what it means to be a ‘good supervisor’, a simple yet self-affirming concept that served as continual motivation for part-time service supervisors to work diligently and strive to achieve the goals set by the corporate office. Much like Ouellet’s ‘super truckers’ the part-time service supervisors’ sense of identity plays an enormous role in motivating them to work as hard as possible (Ouellet, 1994).

#### Identity and the Part-Time Supervisor

Thanks to the prior scholarship on worker identity, we know that the language workers use to describe themselves and their work hints at larger understanding of their role as workers and how they internalize their workplace identity (Ouellet, 1994; Sherman, 2007; Smith, 2001). This is also evident among the part-time service supervisors at Trial Shipping, as the terms used both by part-time service supervisors and their bosses to describe their jobs only hint at larger held beliefs about what makes a person a “good supervisor”. In the words of Derrick, who had a background in Trial

Shipping's Safety Department before he came to fill in for part-time service supervisors as needed,

“Supervisors don't get hurt. That's, that's the unspoken rule. If a supervisor is hurt, and it's, you know, anything that you could possibly talk somebody into not going to the doctor for, they don't. Supervisors just do not get hurt. Unless your arm is hanging by a thread, you are *not* going to the doctor under the auspices of business.... So, you know, supervisors didn't get hurt very often, and that's largely a numbers game, cause there are comparatively few. But, I'm sure there are instances where there are supervisors that should be seeing a doctor that don't, and supervisors who are going to a doctor and saying they were living something in their attic on Thursday when actually they were lifting a box at work. I'm sure that happened....There's no way I could've gotten hurt. I mean I wouldn't have even told anybody, I would've gone to the doctor on my own... it would've been embarrassing. What kind of safety guy can't keep himself safe?

This story is even more telling when one realizes what a stickler for the rules Derrick was known to be. In spite of his otherwise uncanny drive to adhere to the letter of the law in every other area, it was not enough to trump the personal shame he would feel as a supervisor that got injured.

Similarly, supervisors did not miss work. Even though each supervisor was allowed up to 7 days of leave for things like doctor's appointments and other important events, the only time I ever witnessed a part-time *or* full-time supervisor use up all 7 days were when they or their child were chronically ill or in grave medical condition. Even though these off days were first put in place in response to supervisors not having any flexibility for emergencies, there was an unwritten code regarding the impropriety of requesting a day off for anything other than a severe emergency. In fact, in the same evening when one full-time supervisor found out that his father died and he left work early, another full-time supervisor complained to me that he had a lot of nerve leaving work early when he was already going to get three days off for the funeral, in addition to a weekend that was around the corner. As these were nominally in the same class (though occupying different locations within that class) part-time service supervisors

were judged by similar standards. And even though no part-time service supervisor could officially get in trouble for using a sick day, we were all aware of the unspoken rules that governed what made someone a “good supervisor”.

Attempts to enforce the unspoken attendance guidelines and upper management work ethic were so successful that it was a regular occurrence to see instances of these rules regarding hard work and self-sacrifice being internalized and enforced by part-time supervisors. Whenever one of the unload supervisors complained that we had diverted too much work to him instead of sending it to another sorting facility, Becky would tell them basically tell them to “suck it up”, saying that they need to realize that they are a supervisor, and that going the extra mile was their job. When they left the office unsatisfied with her response, she always bad-mouthed them by saying that “he must have forgotten that that is his job” and that “he should realize that this is what supervisors do”. The response to full-time supervisors falling short of their own ideal type consisted of even harsher sanctions. After noticing one full-time supervisor repeatedly falsifying his performance numbers in order to avoid the wrath of the corporate office, a part-time supervisor began to spitefully refer to him as “Fudgins”, for his propensity to ‘fudge’ the numbers. One of the most common complaints of the part-time service supervisors was that when a problem arises, the full-time supervisors “never want to fix the problem, they just want to put icing on it”. When I asked Nell why she thought one of the more notorious full-time supervisors did that, she replied “I don't think he wants to be held accountable if he makes a bad decision, nobody does. But that's what he gets paid to do!” The part-time service supervisors cling so tightly to this concept of the “good supervisor”

that they find themselves taking on another role that they are unaware of: they become the building's neighborhood watch program.

Though these part-time service supervisors are working hard and reaffirming their self identity, they are not doing so with a strategy of self interest and self reliance in mind, but with a carefully crafted script conferred to them when they became nominal members of the managerial class. Even though they are largely cut off from the financial and authoritative perks that the higher-statused managers receive, their class location severely limits the work strategies they have to choose from. Were they hourly workers they could simply choose to join the union and play the role of Ouellet's 'worker' truckers, finding solidarity and camaraderie in their ability to buck the system. Instead, their options are so limited by the technicalities of their nominal class location that their only options are to play ball with the members of management who enjoy all of the perks of their class, or join the lonely ranks of the reviled 'lazy' supervisors (Ouellet, 1994). It is here that the rubber of Wright's concept of contradictory locations within class relations truly meets the road, even though the occupants of this contradictory location can claim to enjoy neither the material benefits nor the authority that Wright claimed were imperative in defining this group. It is through these part-time service supervisors that we realize that, in addition to authority, access to the means of production, and material goods, identity plays an essential role in affecting conflict both within classes and between them.

#### Part-Time Supervisors and their Workers

While it is important to realize the conditions that these supervisors both labor under and actively create for themselves, and the processes that result in their consent



being acquired by upper management, this only tells half the story. In order for the part-time service supervisors, and the rest of management as a whole, to cast themselves as the hard working heroes, there must also be a villain. For every responsible babysitter, ensuring that nothing goes wrong, there must be a baby needing to be tended to. For every dependable supervisor that refuses to call in sick or take a day off, there is a malingerer that leaves our fearless heroes “in the lurch” with barely a moment’s notice. In order for the part-time service supervisors to latch on to the only class position that is available to them, they are forced to paint the only other class position, the worker, as the antithesis of whatever they are. They may not have any real authority, and they may not make even one third the wages that the drivers do, but that does not matter because they know that they are working towards a higher goal: the good of the company. The nature contradictory locations within class relations occupied by these workers, and their reliance on a positive self image built on a class-based ideology, serves only to further the class divide between two groups that are otherwise almost indistinguishable at times.

And yet, while the differences between these proletarianized part-time service supervisors and the hourly workers they manage may appear almost nonexistent on paper, they could not be more stark at the point of production. Much like the strategies of condescension employed by the workers in Rachel Sherman’s *Class Acts*, these supervisors use the value system passed down by upper management to “code themselves” above the workers, “by using both condescension toward and a negative judgment of them.” (Sherman, 2007). Their strategies of demonizing the ‘other’ also mirror the techniques used by Vicki Smith’s temps in *Crossing the Great Divide*, when they defined themselves as the opposite of the “useless temps” (Smith, 2001). Yet, while

the judgment passed down by hotel clerks on guests, or by dedicated temps on the idea of a lazy temp, often carried few external repercussions, these negative judgments of workers in regards to the idealized supervisor were fraught with negative repercussions for the drivers. When the part-time service supervisor was working frantically to achieve the goals handed down by the corporate office, but had trouble getting a driver to help by going out of their way to assume these goals as well, this driver was seen as lazy, or greedy. In many instances, if the worker in question was a man, his masculinity was questioned. Comments like “He’s such a pussy” were uttered quite frequently by both male and female part-time supervisors. Some would even go so far as to make comments like “I can’t believe he has kids. How could you look at that and call it your father.” When a driver calls in sick, he or she is seen as a liar or a slacker, as opposed to the hardworking supervisor that knows how important it is not to take a day off if the business goals are to be met. Instead of simply propping up the self-image of the proletarianized supervisory staff, this dialogue of hard work and virtue being tied closely with managerial goals becomes a weapon in the hands of the supervisor that feels abandoned or even betrayed by the ‘lazy’ drivers under his or her watch.

This has implications that ripple throughout the labor process. If a driver calls in saying that their truck is filling up and that they need another empty one to finish their pickup stops, he or she is almost inevitably dismissed with a “pack it tight”, since someone with the constitution of an hourly worker would throw up their hands too early instead of buckling down and trying to “make it happen”. When a driver calls in to say that he or she is too sick to finish their route, the automatic and repetitively exercised response is “are you sure?”, followed by advice to take a break somewhere comfortable

and see how they feel in a little while. In fact, this dichotomy between the idealized supervisor and the average driver is so prominent that the biggest complaint that every single part-time service supervisor I interviewed had about drivers was their inability to see the bigger picture and realize that “we are all on the same team”, as Becky put it. As a result, it is not uncommon for to be a ‘sacrificial lamb’, or a driver from whom help was not actively advocated for, or was simply withheld on a whim by the supervisory staff, and this sacrificial lamb was almost always a driver who was viewed as being unhelpful or a shirker.

## DISCUSSION

This paper works to address serious gaps in the sociology of work literature regarding the conditions faced by customer service supervisors and how this impacts the workers around them. By shining a light on a small group of lower-level customer service managers, I attempt to provide insight into the field that contemporary customer service literature misses because of its primary focus on workers instead of managers (Hochschild, 1983; Leidner, 1993). In addition, I attempt to address issues of consent that Burawoy and Smith raise, but are not suitable to be applied to lower-statused supervisors. Trying to understand this consent is imperative, for without this understanding we cannot answer simple questions regarding what compels people to work in a post-Fordist economy, when traditional compulsions fail or are simply not in the budget. What I found was that, rather than games providing upper management with a way to secure the supervisors' consent, or being as a tool used by the supervisors to make their own jobs easier as predicted by previous contributions to the field, these part-time service supervisors engage in games at their own peril and strive to achieve the goals set for them by others. I then turn to the literature on worker identity to try to explain what may cause these supervisors to devote themselves so completely to achieving upper management's goals when traditional motivators are absent. Though the workers that Sherman and Ouellet focus on have vastly different goals than the supervisors at Trial shipping, the sense of identity that they derive from how they internalize their jobs plays a major role in their consenting to the labor process (Ouellet,

1994; Sherman 2007). I find that the identities cultivated by these part-time supervisors not only inform how they do their jobs, but serve as the primary motivating factors for their consenting to the conditions placed on them by their own supervisors.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this paper attempts to explain what all of this means for the workers being supervised. By applying lived experiences of proletarianized customer service supervisors to Wright's framework of contradictory locations within class relations, I attempt illustrate what it means to be caught in one of these locations, stuck between the class interests of capital and those of the worker (Wright, 1982). Expanded beyond this setting to the rest of society, my findings indicate that no matter how close the lower echelons of the capitalist class gets to the working class in terms of ownership of production or authority, a vast chasm will remain between the identities available to, and adopted by each group. With this paper I hope to show identity's importance not just as a tool that incentivizes workers, but is also an incredibly divisive force. One that articulates class boundaries and accentuates class differences, and can even be used as a weapon that justifies the consent-giving of one group and the punishment of another. Sadly, even as the part-time service supervisors' identification with the management class creates conflict between them and the hourly workers they supervise, it is being used against them by their own managers in the ever-present drive to extract surplus value from those beneath them in the workplace hierarchy.

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