Coffee Shops: Exploring Urban Sociability and Social Class in the Intersection of Public Private Space

Pozos-Brewer, Rose
Advisor: Ghannam, Farha, 1963-
Department: Swarthmore College. Dept. of Sociology & Anthropology
Type: Thesis (B.A.)
Issue Date: 2015
Terms of Use: Full copyright to this work is retained by the student author. It may only be used for non-commercial, research, and educational purposes. All other uses are restricted.
Permanent URL: http://hdl.handle.net/10066/16539

Abstract:

This thesis presents the coffee shop as a center for urban sociability and traces its development over time. In order to contextualize and unpack the social meaning and uses of a coffee shop, I use theories of public and private place, placemaking, and sociability, with an emphasis on third places and their role in the urban public sphere. “The places where people meet to drink coffee have facilitated the development of what is now typically and stereotypically construed as the public realm,” comments John Manzo (2014), situating coffee shops in the discussion of public and private space. I build on this to investigate how the dichotomy between public and private space is mediated by third places, with the coffee shop as an example of a space that people think of as a third place. The methods I used in my research include reviewing the literature on public and private places, analyzing coffee shop history, examining media representations of coffee culture, and observing in coffee shops located in the New York City borough of Manhattan. My findings challenge the notion of the coffee shop as a third place as conceived by Oldenburg (1989) and show how coffee shops reproduce social class inequality. I offer an alternative conception of the third place, redefining it in terms of hybrid spaces, or spaces that lie in the intersection of the public and the private.

Files in this item

Name: Pozos-Brewer_thes ... 
Size: 7.663Mb
Format: PDF
Description: Thesis
View/Open
The Coffee House book. Read 17 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. When the first coffeehouse opened in London in 1652, customers were... of public sociability that had a demonstrable effect on politics, cultural history, and the development of business life and urban culture. I'm always intrigued to read about the cultural and social importance of food and drink, which is one of the things this book does well, even if it's not a I haven't managed to finish this book, but dip into it from time to time, usually over a nice cup of jo. It's got some fascinating historical insights into the place of coffee and, especially, the coffee house, in modern democracies and Britain in particular -- which was drinking coffee (and banning it) before tea made its way into our cups. The relationship between public and private spheres is one of the key concerns of the modern society. This book investigates this relationship, especially as manifested in the urban space with its social and psychological significance. Through theoretical and historical examination, it explores how and why the space of human societies is subdivided into public and private sections. It starts with the private, interior space of the mind and moves step by step, through the body, home, neighborhood and the city, outwards to the most public, impersonal spaces, exploring the nature of each realm and their complex, interdependent relationships. Architects, urban planners and designers, architectural historians, will find this book to be thought provoking and stimulating. Excerpt.