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'It's called Girl Scouts, not, like, Woman Scouts': emotional labour and girls' bodies

Denise Goerisch* and Kate Swanson

Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA, USA

A key part of the American Girl Scouts organization is their iconic annual cookie sale, which is promoted as providing girls with invaluable business and leadership skills. We argue that it also trains girls in the gendered practice of emotional labour. By learning how to suppress or express certain feelings in public spaces in order to net more profit, girls are socialized to not only regulate their emotions, but also their bodies. This becomes complicated as girls become teens, as they receive mixed messages regarding their bodies. No longer considered to be 'cute girls', teens' bodies occupy a space between adolescence and adulthood, which often creates tension in public space. We explore this tension and teens' responses.

Keywords: Girl Scouts; teens; bodies; workspace; emotional labour

Introduction

In front of a San Diego grocery store Cassia and Erri, two teenage Girl Scouts, sell cookies to customers exiting the store.[1] 'Hi there! Would you like to buy some Girl Scout cookies?' Cassia and Erri ask in unison. One after the other, customers pass them by, casually stating they have already bought cookies from other *girls* in their neighbourhood. 'Thank you for supporting Girl Scouts!' Cassia replies in a sing-songy voice. An elderly man approaches the teens before entering the store. 'Aren't you a little old to be selling Girl Scout cookies?' While taken aback, Cassia and Erri collectively explain to the elderly man that Girl Scouts is for all girls, including teenagers and that the cookie sale supports travel opportunities for older scouts, as well as service projects to better the community. He was not entirely convinced.

The bodies of teenage girls often exist at a precipice of adolescence and womanhood. Teenage girls are considered women by some societal standards, but are also viewed as children based upon their perceived lack of agency and autonomy. Existing in-between two spaces can be stressful, not only for the girls who are still in the process of developing their identities, but also for customers as clearly demonstrated in the above interaction. It highlights a reality that many teenage Girl Scouts face: customers want to buy cookies from cute little girls – not teenagers with braces, acne, and breasts. This raises the question: why do customers want to buy from cute little girls and not from those girls burgeoning on womanhood? We argue that it is due in part to the particular emotions young girls induce in customers based upon their learned bodily performances of 'cuteness,' whereas teens may induce feelings of anxiety and confusion in public spaces.

*Corresponding author. Email: goerisch@mail.sdsu.edu

At a young age, Girl Scouts are trained to labour emotionally through the educational component of the organization's cookie sale. The Girl Scouts base their cookie programme on the development of five key business and leadership skills: (1) goal-setting; (2) decision-making; (3) money management; (4) people skills; and (5) business ethics. While all of these five major skills are stressed, most girls and volunteers praise one skill set in particular: *people skills*. The cookie programme guide for troop leaders (2010) defines people skills as learning 'how to talk to, listen to and work with all kinds of people while selling cookies' (20). Additionally, people skills are framed in terms of helping girls master one of the most useful skills of the cookie sale: customer service. Through this educational programming, as well as through societal reactions, we argue that young girls quickly learn that a critical and valued business skill is the gendered practice of emotional labour. We define emotional labour as the act of inducing or suppressing feelings for the benefits of others (Hochschild 1983). The Girl Scouts, while never explicitly using the term emotional labour, encourage girls to induce certain emotions or feelings to net more sales. As we discuss later, even cookie names such as 'Savannah Smiles' push girls to play upon childhood merriment, whether genuine or not. While we recognize the importance of interpersonal skills and relationships, we question the promotion of emotional labour as a way to not only regulate very young girls' emotions, but also their bodies in order to sell cookies to sustain the organization. This regulation of bodies and emotions becomes complicated as girls age into teenagers and their bodies come to represent a disruption in how girlhood and femininity are constructed in public space.

Why do bodies of young girls and teenage girls matter and more importantly, why should they matter? Geographers have questioned the role of bodies extensively, especially the gendered (as well as child or youthful) body in space (Longhurst 2001; Longhurst 1995; special issue of *Children's Geographies* 2009). However, some have suggested that discussion on the body is absent in certain spaces (McDowell and Court 1994), specifically the workspace (McMorran 2012). McMorran argues that geographers need to pay closer attention to the spatiality of embodied labour practices in workspaces, but we would like to extend this to include unpaid labour spaces as well. Feminist geographers have engaged in the role of the body in the everyday experiences of unpaid workspaces, namely reproductive labour spaces and spaces of giving (i.e. volunteering) (McDowell 1999; Milligan 2001; Schroeder 2006). However, despite the rich literature on the everyday experiences of the unpaid labour force and the role of the body in such spaces (Gibson-Graham 1996), there has been little on the ways in which bodies are conditioned to engage in such spaces, especially in regard to children and youth.

Within the past decade, there has been a significant amount of research on the emotional geographies of children and young people in public spaces (Thomas 2005; Herrera, Jones, and Thomas de Benítez 2009; Kato 2009). Much attention has been given towards the influence of emotion in the home and workplace in geography in general, especially in regard to social constructions of 'care' (see special issue of *Social and Cultural Geography* 2011). Many geographers (England 1996; Milligan 2000; Conradson 2003; Lawson 2007; Bowlby 2011) have examined the feminization of 'care work' in and outside the home. Additionally, scholars (Hochschild 1983; Boris and Salazar Parrenas 2010; Garey and Hansen 2011) have noted the ways in which emotional labour is naturalized and essentialized in the post-industrial economy, which contributes to the continued devaluing of care work (i.e. paid and unpaid caregiving) by women. However, missing from this dialogue is the emotional experiences of young people in the 'workplace'. While there has been some discussion on this issue outside of the USA (Katz 2004; Ansell 2009; Swanson 2010), there has been little discussion on the connections between work and emotion among young people in the USA, particularly as it relates to bodies and identities. There is a certain amount of 'care' performed within the context of emotional labour, in general; however, we are critical of girls learning to care under the pretence of turning

a profit. What exactly are girls learning about their bodies in terms of the presentation of their gendered selves in the American workforce?

The emotional labour reproduced in the cookie sale stresses the use of girls' bodies to sell cookies. Girls in American society are socialized to believe that 'cuteness' is desirable above all other traits as demonstrated through their interactions with adults, peers, and most significantly through mass media. Gendered constructions of cuteness in American and Japanese cultures have broadly been investigated (Harris 2000; Cross 2004; Yano 2009), yet studies of the ways in which girls' identities are framed through cuteness are surprisingly absent within geography (though, this is not to say that beauty and appearance as women age has not been explored within geography. For example, see Longhurst 2008). Rather, geography has focused on the ways in which girls resist society's prescriptions of girlhood and their relationship to public space (Thomas 2005, 2009; Cahill 2006).

We argue that the Girl Scouts may be teaching young girls to reproduce prescribed gender roles by manipulating public displays of their bodies and identities during the cookie sale. This does lead to some resistance, particularly from older Girl Scouts who no longer consider themselves to be 'cute' according to society's own prescriptions of cuteness and girlhood. As girls age, many unwittingly reject these identities, which results in complicating these spaces of consumption that disrupt normalized conventions of cuteness. While cultures have varying definitions of cuteness, cuteness can be broadly defined in American society as an expression of youth and innocence (Cross 2004). Most studies on cuteness focus on children and adults as consumers of cuteness in the USA and Japan (Lent 1999; McVeigh 2000; Miller 2004; Nakamura 2004; Cross and Smits 2005; Macias and Evers 2007), which speaks to these societies' obsession with youth and beauty. While there has been research on the regulation of beautiful gendered bodies in workspaces (Gimlin 1996; Harvey 2005; Parvez 2006; Price 2008), more research is needed to how girls' bodies are regulated to become cute in workspaces. In what follows, we explore how scouts use their identities as 'cute little girls' to not only sell cookies, but also a particular representation of girlhood that is equated with wholesome goodness and innocence. We then explore how this representation is complicated as girls become teens and young women.

The Girl Scouts prides itself as an organization that is inclusive to all girls no matter their race, ethnicity, class, nationality, or even gender identity. However, many of the older Girl Scouts in this study often feel marginalized by the organization. An older scout is a scout who is typically enrolled in middle school or high school and would be considered a 'tween' or teenager by American standards and expectations. These feelings of exclusion are exacerbated in the context of the annual Girl Scout cookie sale where girls' bodies are on display in public spaces on neighbourhood streets and in front of grocery stores, and yet are often met with hostility, frustration, apathy, and even anger. In what follows, we explore how emotional labour is reproduced by girls themselves, as little attention has been paid to how children, especially girl children, learn to become emotional labourers in the 'workspace'. Moreover, we explain why bodies matter to American girls and young women as they learn to labour emotionally.

Project description and methods

This paper relies upon data collected from a broader project concerning the Girl Scouts in San Diego, California. This project is guided by feminist ethics and uses ethnographic research methods, including participant observation; focus group discussions; interviews; surveys; and analyses of print and digital media, including Youtube videos, guidebooks, and websites.

For over two years, one of the authors, Goerisch, worked closely with two local Girl Scout troops in San Diego County during the 2011 and 2012 cookies seasons. Each council has a designated cookie season, which generally takes places from January to March of each year. One of the

troops, Troop 1234, is the focus of this paper as they organized two council-wide cookie sale-related events. Troop 1234, situated near a major university, mostly comprises middle-class girls ranging in age between 14 and 16 years old. As a requirement for their Silver Award, the second-highest award in Girl Scouting, Troop 1234 organized a day-long cookie-selling workshop for over 80 Brownies. This workshop highlighted the five skills listed above and the teen scouts and troop leaders guided Brownies on the practice of selling cookies. Due to this event's success, the Girl Scout Council asked the troop to organize another much larger event the following year for over 150 Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors. Daisies are 5 and 6 years old; Brownies are 7 and 8 years old; Juniors are 9 and 10 years old. We use these training workshops to guide some of the analysis within this paper. Informal and formal interviews were held with adult volunteers and parents to develop a better understanding of their own perceptions about the programme and its impacts on the scouts.

Learning to (emotionally) labour: gender, cuteness, and emotional labour

Research on children and young people learning to labour, or learning how to become 'good' workers, has been widely conducted. Most notably, Willis' highly influential *Learning to Labour* (1977) details the transition of working class men in the UK (the *lads*) from school to work. However, with many manufacturing jobs being outsourced to the Global South, many young people can only find low-paid, unskilled jobs in the service sector (McDowell 2000; Cumbers, Helms, and Swanson 2010). Emotional labour is a vital skill needed in the growing service sector, as youth must learn to suppress their feelings in the interest of good customer service. This is especially the case for girls, many of whom are steered into the service or care sector, despite other career aspirations (Steedman 1982; Gaskell 1992; Francis 2002). Colley (2003) argues that British working class girls or 'care girls' are more likely to be given working class, gender-stereotyped jobs because they are socialized to induce and suppress certain emotions in order to become caregivers, and the management and control of feelings is often central to girls' transition to the workplace (see also Bates 1990). However, many of these studies focus on 'care work' (i.e. childcare, hospice, nursing, elderly care, or education) rather than other types of service sector jobs associated with emotional labour, such as retail, hospitality, or food service. This paper adds to the discussion on how girls learn to emotionally labour but does so from a US perspective. Despite the organization's emphasis on building future entrepreneurs and empowering girls through learning important business and leadership skills, we believe that the Girl Scouts may be preparing girls for positions in the post-industrial service sector by training them how to capitalize on their bodies and their emotions in order to turn a profit.

The educational programming provided by the Girl Scouts encourages girls to reproduce emotions associated with dominant constructions of femininity (i.e. friendliness, helpfulness, and happiness), thus, forcing girls' bodies to conform with behaviour associated with the service industry, as well as valuing heteronormative prescriptions of American beauty and cuteness. Girl Scout guidebooks, handbooks, and other literature subscribe to a vision of femininity where emotional labour and soft skills are perceived as invaluable, perhaps because both of these are vitally important in the female-dominated service economy (McDowell 1999). For instance, both the Daisy and Brownie programmes as well as the accompanying training manual for Daisies titled, *Smart Cookies in the Daisy Flower Garden,* push girls towards futures in a service economy by lauding customer service as one of the most important skills to possess. The *Smart Cookies* manual narrates a story about three Daisy scouts named Cora, Chandra, and Campbell. In the story, the girls discuss the cookie sale, while they play in a magical garden populated by beautiful anthropomorphic flowers. Two of the flowers, Lupe the Lupine and Sunny the

Sunflower, who also happen to personify different parts of the Girl Scout Law,[2] discuss the qualities needed to enact good customer service (Figure 1):

> And customer service is also about being friendly and helpful-like me! said Sunny. "So be friendly to all your customers. And be helpful. If a customer asks a question, answer it right away …
>
> As Sunny talked, Lupe lifted her sunglasses a bit and then settled them back on her baby-blue face. 'Sure, being friendly and helpful is super important,' the long, lean flower said. 'But customer service is also about being honest and fair- like me!' (Tuchman 2008, 8)

The story continues while the flowers provide further examples of what it means to be a good sales associate, such as displaying pleasant and thoughtful behaviour when handling the exchange of money and cookies. Through this training manual, the bodies of five- and six-year-old Daisies are trained to mimic the behaviours and actions of the flowers that embody parts of the Girl Scout Law.

Girls' and young women's bodies are at the epicentre of debates on femininity and female sexuality due to their constant and controlled display in public and private spaces (Aapola, Gonick, and Harris 2005). Representations of girls' and women's bodies are reproduced, airbrushed, and commodified in cultural products such as magazines, television programmes, and film, and display girls' and women's bodies in an untenable ideal that glorifies youth and hyper femininity (Cross 2004; Aapola, Gonick, and Harris 2005; Yano 2009). Consequently, from a young age, girls are socialized to strive for this ideal of American beauty. Additionally,

Figure 1. Lupe the Lupine and Sunny the Sunflower discuss good customer service. Source: From Tuchman (2008).

the adoration of youth in US society conflates innocence and purity with youthful beauty or 'cuteness'. In this regard, Western constructions of childhood can be understood as freedom from, or even as a lack of guilt or sin; furthermore, it conveys ignorance and naivety (Redfern 1997). Innocence is then constructed as a natural state for children (Ariès 1962). This perception of childhood innocence and wholesomeness is deeply embedded in the Girl Scouts and the cookie sale. The Girl Scout Law asks scouts to always be 'friendly and helpful', 'considerate and caring', and to be polite and respectful to their peers and adults. In addition to this, most of the boxes of cookies feature predominately younger girls (whether intentional or not) further associating the Girl Scout identity with young and cute girls (Figure 2). Moreover, the cookie programme enables girls to reproduce these 'cute' identities as demonstrated through the Daisy and Brownie guidebooks and through training workshops led by older scouts, and is reaffirmed by the actions and praise of adult volunteers and customers.

In the Daisy training manual, *Smart Cookies*, Daisies learn to perform their 'cuteness' through various playful activities, making them acutely aware of their gendered bodies. In the 'Being a Smart Cookie with Customers' activity, Daisies engage in a role-playing game where they pretend to be both sellers and customers. The leader demonstrates proper customer service conduct, which the girls re-enact. A script is provided to guide both the girls, as well as the leaders. When the girls are trained to 'make the ask' they learn that they can manipulate their identities as 'cute little girls' to help them sell cookies. For example, during the 2012 rally, Anna and Alaska led a role-playing game in which Daisies had to 'make the ask' during a door-to-door sale. At one point, one of us, Goerisch, was enlisted to role-play three characters: a rude customer, a polite customer, and a customer with dietary restrictions. Anna and Alaska stood next to the girls, prodding them to smile and 'make the ask' as Goerisch (truly embodying her role as a rude customer) yelled at them to leave (see Goerisch 2013 for the feminist ethics of volunteering in geographic research). The girls were told to smile and to thank the customer for their time; however, many of the Daisies seemed confused by Goerisch's rudeness and simply stood there in surprise. In this exercise, girls learned not only to be cute and polite while 'making the ask' but also what to

Figure 2. Boxes featuring younger Girl Scouts. Photo courtesy of the author.

do when faced with disappointment. This served to prepare girls for a wide range of customer service situations that they might experience in the future, both in and out of the cookie sale. This exercise also taught girls that emotions associated with frustration are not acceptable in public workspaces. While girls were not chastised for their lack of grace, Alaska and Anna told them that they needed to smile more and always say 'please' and 'thank you', no matter how rude a customer might be.

Another example occurred during the 2011 workshop, 14-year-old Cassia led a session on people skills. In her session, she explained the value of people skills and emphasized that customers would much rather buy cookies from a girl who was confident and friendly. Girls were encouraged to smile and always say 'please' and 'thank you' during their practice sales pitches. This also speaks to how young people themselves reproduce and normalize gendered practices of cuteness. As demonstrated later in this paper, adults often explicitly tell older scouts that they are no longer 'cute little girls', which can devalue the labour of older scouts in the cookie sale. On the contrary, older scouts are perceived as 'good' and valued workers when they teach younger scouts to be cute in order to net more sales.

Bodily displays of cuteness were also encouraged during the 2012 Cookie-Kickoff Rally. The younger scouts were asked to create a cheer, song, or a rap about cookies to perform at site sales. A site sale is typically a sale stationed outside a business, church, or park. Girls sang, cheered, and rapped about how much cookies cost, what they planned to do with the money, and how great scouting is (and some girls even had accompanying dance moves). When asked about whether the rally was a success or not, Senior troop leader, adult volunteer, and rally organizer, Lucy, stated that she received many positive emails about the rally. In particular, she said many adults loved the songs and cheers because they were 'incredibly cute and adorable'. Many of the volunteers interviewed expressed a belief that younger scouts sell more cookies than older girls because customers are more likely to buy from a 'cute little girl', rather than from a teenager (although as discussed later, this is not always the case). These sentiments were echoed in a 2009 podcast (Tintocalis 2009) by an older Girl Scout who provided a deliberate tactic to increase sales: invite a younger sister to tag along. The message embraced by girls, along with volunteers and customers, is that girlish cuteness sells cookies.

Cuteness is reproduced in multiple ways and spaces throughout the cookie sale. From the storybook featuring hyper-feminized flowers, to little Daisies singing songs about cookies, to even the cookies themselves, cuteness is a key marketing and organization branding strategy. In 2011, the Girl Scouts unveiled their newest cookie, Savannah Smiles, a lemon-flavoured half-moon-shaped cookie to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Girl Scouts in the USA. The cookie is meant to represent being friendly, helpful, and wholesome – traits that all scouts should embody. Girls were encouraged to use the Savannah Smiles as a way to promote the sale and many local Brownie troops were 'all smiles' about the cookie and the sale, even going so far as to elaborately decorate their booths with pictures of smiling Brownies. Girls are trained to smile when selling cookies as a form of emotional labour, which may counter girls' actual feelings about the sale. For some scouts, especially younger girls, selling cookies can be tedious work, as girls must spend hours in front of grocery stores or wandering neighbourhoods to knock on doors. While the cookie sale may be an enticing reason to join scouting, it is not until girls actually begin to participate in the sale that they realize that selling cookies is a lot of *work*. Even though some girls may not enjoy participating in the sale, troop leaders encourage them to present an image of happiness when engaging in customer service in order to maintain public 'feeling rules', which are a set of societal standards on how to express appropriate emotions both in public and private spaces (Hochschild 1983).

Emotions that do not conform to these dominant prescriptions of femininity are continually controlled and repressed by adult volunteers and customers. While many volunteers and girls

laud the cookie sale as a way to help girls become better public speakers, girls who are too quiet, shy, or disinterested are looked down upon. For instance, Lily, the mother of a five-year-old Daisy, says her daughter was in a special programme at her school for being 'too shy or internal' so she was very proud of her daughter for 'making the ask' throughout the cookie sale. Regina, a mother of a Daisy, also praises the programme as a way for young girls to build upon their public speaking skills; however, she believes many girls do not have the patience to stand in front of a grocery store for extended periods of time. They become disinterested in selling and are therefore perceived as not being 'good little workers'. The mother of two older scouts, Jill, agrees that young girls do not have the capacity to remain focused and also believes that it is very difficult for younger scouts to overcome their shyness. She says that she has witnessed many Daisies and Brownies who never greeted customers or asked them to buy cookies. In the end, many children have to be coached and prodded before they (reluctantly) engage with strangers, a behaviour that they are repeatedly told not to perform in other public spaces. Throughout this process, girls' bodies are being trained and regulated to put on their best smiles and repress their internal feelings in order to make a sale.

Comparing the Girls Scouts' cookie programme to the Boy Scouts of America's annual popcorn sale helps to illustrate how these programmes reproduce gendered norms concerning emotional labour. The Boy Scouts popcorn sale, unlike the Girl Scout cookie programme, allows boys to sell their popcorn online. According to the Girl Scouts, while girls may engage in online marketing initiatives such as posting Youtube videos, using social networking sites, and emailing loyal customers, scouts are not allowed to sell cookies online. The organization argues that the purpose of the sale is 'to encourage scouts to learn face-to-face business skills, from making the sale to coping with rejection' (Duffy 2011), which places an emphasis on girls maximizing the use of their customer service skills through emotional labour, as well as perpetuating the common belief that the bodies of cute little girls will net more sales than a semi-anonymous, amorphous online entity. There is also concern over the safety of girls' bodies in cyberspace (Soller 2009). Stemming from concerns about 'stranger danger' and paedophiliac groups online, many parents fear for their children's safety and well-being in cyberspace (Valentine and Holloway 2001; Holloway and Valentine 2003). However, parents are often much more willing and likely to grant spatial freedoms to boys, which also this extends into the realm of cyberspace (Valentine 1996).

Similar to the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts are encouraged to perform appropriate gender behaviour during their organization's annual popcorn fundraiser. One way the Boy Scouts regulate boys' emotions and bodies is by discouraging the participation of 'face-to-face' sales. Instead, Boy Scouts are encouraged to host online sales (Welcome to Spring 2012 Popcorn Training 2012; Welcome to Spring 2012). To engage in online sales, scouts establish online accounts and websites for customers, which are then advertised in the form of short films on Youtube. Unlike the Girl Scout Youtube videos that feature simple sales pitches, many Boy Scout packs create short films (some as long as 10 minutes). These films feature Boy Scouts battling against evil customers such as Darth Vader or a Sith Lord (Scout Wars Popcorn Kickoff 2008; Popcorn Sales Video Cub Scouts 2010); brave knights brandishing weapons made of popcorn (Troop 473 Trails End Popcorn Kickoff 2008); boxing in a championship match (Pack 134 Popcorn Kickoff 2009); or even staging a war with *menacing* Girl Scouts (Pack 250's Popcorn Caper 2011). In two videos, both produced by Pack 250 (Pack 250's Popcorn Caper 2011; Popcorn Idol 2010), pack leaders and scouts degrade and devalue Girl Scouts and their selling capabilities throughout the films. During *Popcorn Idol*, a Simon Cowell-type judge calls a Boy Scout, a 'Girl Scout' based on his poor selling performance, and he is eliminated from the competition. It seems within the space of the Boy Scout popcorn sale, it is not so much about winning over customers with friendly and helpful attitudes

that might be associated with emotional labour and more importantly femininity, but winning customers over by being overly confident, displaying 'playful' violence, and, at times, reproducing misogynistic rhetoric.

A comparison of these two organizations' selling strategies expands arguments on how workspace is gendered through emotional labour. By coding innovative workspaces (i.e. cyberspace) as inherently masculine, these videos also reinforce constructions of business and enterprise, as well as cyberspace, as being masculine and patriarchal domains to be fought over and conquered. Girls, on the other hand, are taught to become *servers* rather than leaders in such workspaces. Boy Scouts may be perpetuating dominant constructions of American masculinity and boyhood within these videos, but adults are the ones enabling these reproductions (based on the inclusion of post-production video effects and the overwhelmingly adult male presence in the videos). While adult men may be supporting boys in their entrepreneurial endeavours, it would seem that some are also creating spaces that devalue women and girls' labour.

In contrast to the Boy Scout popcorn videos, videos featuring Daisies and Brownies emphasize cute bodies to net more sales. For the past two years, the Girl Scouts of San Diego asked girls to send their 'best pitch' videos for a chance to win a pizza party for their whole troop, a free week of camp, and have their video featured at the following year's Cookie-Kickoff event. The rules for the contest state that the girls must be supervised by an adult during the filming and submission of the video onto Youtube, again highlighting the perceived danger of girls' bodies in cyberspace. While placing girls' bodies on the Internet may seemingly contradict safety concerns regarding children and the Internet, it is adults and not the girls who are controlling girls' bodies in this instance. In several of the pitch videos featuring Daisies and Brownies, parents take on key roles in writing, directing, and filming the video, which is especially evident in a 'pitch' video for Daisy Troop 5383 (2011). In the video, a troop of 10 scouts sing a song about their favourite cookies, 'play' musical instruments, and dance in front a huge banner. In other words, they are being cute. It is unclear whether the Daisies or their parents conceptualized the video, but what is clear (by the inclusion of post-production effects) that adults directed the video, thus dictating the girls' cute performances. Girls' bodies are not only regulated in front of grocery stores or on the streets of their neighbourhoods, but also in cyberspace.

The cookie sale programme emphasizes that the five essential business and leadership skills developed during the cookie season will be used throughout girls' everyday lives and into adulthood. For example, learning to manage money will not only help scouts take orders and handle money, but in the future, girls will be able to 'easily handle a checking account, and even stay on top of her cell phone bill!' (Girl Scout Cookies and Learning Life Skills 2010). While learning to budget is a very valuable skill, the underlying emphasis is not only on gaining leadership skills, but also learning to become a service worker in a post-industrial economy. Under the guise of people skills, the organization heralds customer service as one of the most important leadership skills American women can possess. While developing personal relationships and public speaking are invaluable, we question the manner in which girls are being socialized to embrace emotional labour and manipulate their bodies to express these values. The Girl Scouts takes the business of selling cookies seriously. Scouts sell approximately 200 million boxes a year, making $700 million in sales (Olson 2007). While the scouts are the organization's primary source of income, Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) wants the cookie programme to give girls the opportunity to grow as young American women and learn the importance of both financial and personal success. Yet, they do so through an educational programme that capitalizes upon women and girls' emotional labour and profits from young girls' cuteness in order to help sustain the organization.

'You're a Girl Scout?' Teenage bodies in public (work)space

As argued above, girls' bodies are featured prominently within the context of the cookie sale. They are used to not only net more sales, but also highlight the ways in which adults intervene and normalize cute bodies to reproduce a form of femininity that is familiar to an American public. However, the perception of girlhood presented to customers does not always align with customers' own perceptions of *who* a Girl Scout should be, as the bodies of older Girl Scouts complicate public perceptions. Due to these public perceptions (as well as strong influences from parents and volunteers), older scouts feel increasingly marginalized and anxious within the cookie sale because of their developing bodies. While the organization has made some efforts to move beyond this paradigm by granting older scouts certain privileges within the sale that are not awarded to younger scouts, older scouts still feel that they cannot compete with younger scouts because they are no longer perceived as 'cute little girls'. While younger girls' bodies are regulated by adults to perform behaviour associated with femininity in the workplace, adults, namely customers, dictate where teenage bodies *should* be, which is not necessarily in public space.

As girls grow older, they are no longer associated with dominant constructions of cuteness. Girls and young women are profoundly aware of how their bodies are regulated in public and private space (Lalik and Oliver 2005). Girls are often reminded of their bodies as a public site, which is constantly commented on and monitored by others, both men and women alike (Fine and Macpherson 1992). As experienced by many of the older girls in this study, they quickly learn that their bodies become even more on display in the public space of the grocery store and neighbourhood as they become young women, creating a liminal space wherein the older scouts can no longer identify as 'cute little girls' but cannot identify as women either. They receive conflicting messages regarding what their bodies represent; on the one hand they are confidently empowered, whereas on the other they are hyper-sexualized in a negative light. These girls then exist in a fraught space between adolescence and adulthood and consequently experience numerous tensions and anxieties (Turner 1967). Their location on the precipice of childhood and adulthood also creates uneasiness among adults. Teenagers, in general, are often portrayed as dangerous and unpredictable threats that can potentially bring violence and chaos to public spaces (Valentine 1996; Mattingly 2001). Complicating things further, many of these girls sell cookies in the late evening due to their hectic schedules, perhaps evoking problematic connotations in regard to workingwomen in public spaces at night (Patel 2010). Indeed, the teenage girls in this study expressed anxiety about not knowing where exactly they belonged since the public no longer considered them to be 'little girls' anymore, and in most cases did not even identify them as *legitimate* Girl Scouts.

To some extent, the Girl Scouts does strive to break down the barriers that create such confusion for girls. The Girl Scouts as an organization encourages older scouts to become leaders in their community and work for social change. However, while many of the older scouts in this study see themselves as future leaders with the capacity to make significant change in their communities, they also believe that society views teenagers or rather teenage Girl Scouts as social deviants or, as one scout put it, as 'thugs'. This tension over representation has led many older scouts to no longer engage in door-to-door sales as they fear rejection or public scrutiny due to their teenage bodies. For instance, Anna, a 15-year-old scout, argues that:

> It might be kind of weird too if someone opened the door and there was, like, a high schooler asking to buy Girl Scout cookies … because there's *those people* who come door-to-door and they're like, 'Buy a magazine subscription to help the veterans,' and like my grandpa had to close the door on one of *those people* because he wouldn't go away. So this [is] kind of a stigma. (focus group 7 May 2011 – emphasis added)

The teenage girls in this study feel caught in an in-between space; while many of them still consider themselves to be girls, others including society, the organization, and even their parents see them as near-women. These in-between spaces become even more apparent when older scouts are forced to reproduce cuteness through emotional labour, which makes many seem more conscious of their ageing bodies.

Older scouts seemingly occupy both adolescence and adulthood while simultaneously belonging to neither group within the context of the sale. This tension is amplified by the public's misconceived perception of who *should* be a cookie-selling Girl Scout, which is not necessarily a teenage girl. Girls' ageing bodies are highlighted and often targeted by adults within the context of the sale, which disrupts normalized definitions of girlhood. As highlighted in the interaction at the beginning of this paper, as well as during numerous site sales, older girls were harassed by elderly men and surprisingly, women in their 20s and 30s. The teenage scouts were chastised for being too old to be selling cookies and some customers even suggested that they were taking opportunities away from younger scouts. This 'disruption' engendered feelings of uneasiness with older scouts as they did not know how to react when they were harassed by customers for not being what a *perceived* Girl Scout should be. As Erri, astutely phrased it, 'It's called *Girl* Scouts, not, like, *Woman* Scouts' (personal interview 16 April 2012 – emphasis added). According to many girls and adults, they think customers perceive Girl Scouts to be 'little Brownies with, like, pigtails' (focus group 7 May 2011) or 'tiny little 6 year old girls with no teeth in their mouth' (personal interview 23 March 2012), so when customers do see older scouts selling cookies it often causes some confusion and, in some cases, hostility as described above. The older scouts attribute this to society's general apprehensions surrounding teenagers in public space. Older scouts and volunteers tended to concur that the organization needs to rebrand itself in order to limit these hostile interactions between older scouts and customers.

While teenage girls' bodies often induced unease or hostility from customers in public market spaces, teenage girls' bodies are also seemingly invisible in such spaces. One of the authors observed countless customers exiting grocery stores without acknowledging the teen scouts' presence. Akin to women's experiences in workspaces associated with masculinity, where women's bodies are often invisible (in terms of promotion or advancement) but are made visible when they are subjected to workspace discrimination or harassment, the bodies of teen girls are overly visibly but also seemingly physically and socially invisible at the same time (Miller and Miller 1995; Clarke and Griffin 2008). Thus, this tension between physical and social in/visibility in the workspace of the cookie sale exacerbated feelings of anxiety and frustration by teen scouts. In general, many teen scouts in this study feel that the organization excludes older scouts. While the organization tries to be inclusive of all girls, they recognize that older scouts have difficulty selling cookies in public space.

Older scouts have to practise a different form of emotional labour then, one that assuages the fears and anxieties of the American public. Unlike younger scouts, older scouts have to constantly legitimize their Girl Scout status. They do this in a number of ways. Older scouts often explain to customers that girls can be in the scouts up through the age of 17 and many continue to volunteer after they graduate from high school. While younger scouts often do not get asked what they plan to do with their cookie money (though they are trained to respond if asked), older scouts, in order to justify their motivations for selling cookies, explain to customers that they will use the money to fund community service projects. Older scouts, therefore, have to demonstrate to customers that they are not a threat, but rather good citizens in the making.

The organization encourages older scouts to sell cookies to private businesses in the form of donations in order to further resolve public fears concerning teenage bodies, as well as to net more sales. However, this effort to push teen girls out of the public market spaces of the grocery stores and neighbourhoods perhaps unintentionally places more emphasis on feminine bodies. By

making teenage bodies seemingly invisible to the American public, girls must learn to present themselves as adult women to private corporations in order to garner respect and earn sales. For instance, during a troop meeting, the mother of one of the troop members came to talk to the girls about how to approach a private business. While she gave some helpful advice about sales presentation, the majority of her talk was about personal appearance. She suggested girls wear professional attire, nude stockings, with simple and clean make-up, and sleek pulled back hair. She stressed to the older scouts that coming dressed as a typical teenage girl would not garner respect from CEOs. Again, teen girls learn that bodies convey certain messages and that the only way to earn respect or net more sales is to use their bodies in a way that adults will find appropriate or appealing. Here, girls receive mixed messages about their bodies. Despite, the organization's attempts to promote positive body images (most recently by collaborating with the beauty corporation, Dove), scouts are still unsure what to make of their bodies and sexuality. There were many meetings where scouts discussed the repercussions of dressing too provocatively, but also talked about how liberating it can be to dress in whatever they wanted. The girls' own contrasting views on women's bodies exhibit their own ever-changing views on sexuality and their own bodies.

Over the past several years, the Girl Scouts has become increasingly aware of the various issues surrounding tween and teen girls (Salmond and Schoenburg 2009). The organization has done much to try to retain older scout membership (which has always been an issue within the organization) by offering appealing leadership and travel opportunities. Despite this, older scouts are still marginalized within the context of the cookie sale since they are not perceived to be 'cute', pigtail-adorned, and toothless Brownies. As demonstrated above, many older scouts and volunteers expressed disappointment and frustration regarding the organization's marketing of scouting as being primarily for younger girls, and many perceived this as a ploy to net more sales. As such, teen girls receive conflicting messages about their bodies in public spaces: they are too old to be girls, but too young to be women.

Conclusion

Over 50 million American women and girls have been members of the Girl Scouts at one time (GSUSA 2012). Correspondingly, many girls and women have participated in the Girl Scout cookie sale, either as girls selling cookies in front of grocery stores or as adult volunteers, perhaps consoling a daughter after she barely missed her cookie-selling goal. It is in moments such as these that girls learn what their gendered bodies represent in public workspaces. For younger girls, their bodies signify an idyllic form of childhood built upon dominant constructions of innocence, wholesomeness, and cuteness, qualities that comprise the ideal American girl. In a world of Disney Princesses and ubiquitous blonde pop stars, girls are repeatedly exposed to a hegemonic construction of cuteness, in which whiteness, able-bodiedness, and upper-middle class qualities are most desired. It is through this display of cuteness in public spaces that young girls learn the gendered practice of emotional labour, a practice that often stays with them throughout their lives.

Girls are regularly bombarded with images of what it means to be an attractive woman in American society. While many tween and teenage girls strive to become like the women they see in magazines or on television, the American public does not want to see mature-looking (and possibly sexualized) girls selling cookies in front of grocery stores; rather, they want to see cute, young (and possibly innocent) girls. We believe this speaks to societal anxieties regarding young, sexualized, feminine bodies in public spaces. As girls age into teenagers, they quickly learn that their bodies incite these societal anxieties in public spaces. For young teens who are

unable to rely upon their cuteness to net sales, they must learn a new form of emotional labour that is suggestive of adult female embodied practices. This is a difficult and conflicting time for teens as they occupy a liminal space in adolescence wherein they are not quite children, yet not quite adults. In this position, they receive conflicting messages about their bodies in public spaces. While the Girl Scouts has tried to increase older girl membership, as well as older girl participation in the cookie sale, these awkward 'in-between' spaces within the sale persist, and create feelings of alienation and marginalization among older scouts.

The Girl Scout movement does encourage girls to develop positive self-images and often does so through informative educational programmes and activities. Lucy and Troop 1234 had completed one such programme prior to being the focus of this study, wherein they examined images of women in the media and openly discussed eating disorders. However, this sort of critical inquiry regarding representation of girls' bodies did not continue on into the cookie sale. The cookie sale presents a contradiction, wherein cute, youthful, feminine bodies are privileged and heralded, while awkward bodies on the verge of womanhood are not. Indeed, we question the organization's message of empowerment within the context of the sale, particularly for older scouts, especially as the skills highlighted in the sale seemingly prepare both younger and older scouts for labour in the service or care economy.

Whether it is embodying the ideal feminine worker or American citizen, girls are often taught what their bodies represent. More importantly, it is adults and adult-led institutions controlling, regulating, and manipulating girls' bodies. While it can be argued that girls directly benefit from these adult-controlled manipulations of their bodies in that they receive some funds from cookie sales, as well as learn leadership skills, it may be valorising practices that devalue the work of women and girls. Many youth organizations, associations, and groups are conceived as being spaces to engender future citizens and transition children and young people into adulthood (Gagen 2000; Mills 2011, 2013; Robinson and Mills 2012). In doing so, dominant gender roles are routinely normalized (Apple and Passet 2003; Miller 2007). This research expands on current geographic discussions regarding the socialization of children and young people in youth organizations and clubs, especially in regard to gender.

Little research has focused on how young girls learn to become emotional labourers. This paper brings attention to this critical issue and demonstrates how very young girls learn how to use their bodies in order to labour emotionally. Given the importance of the Girl Scout cookie sale in American culture, this is a consequential space in which to explore how girls are trained to suppress their feelings and emotions for the sake of profit at a very young age. Our goal with this paper is to broaden perspectives on how embodied labour is practised by young girls and teens in public and unpaid workspaces. Understanding these practices may help shed light on how gendered norms are reproduced as girls age into women.

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Notes

1. Pseudonyms are used for both individuals and troops.
2. The Girl Scout Law: I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

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