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Redefining Regions and Roles: the Case of Twitter and the Food Service Industry

Abstract:

While Goffman (1959) articulates a dramaturgical perspective wherein frontstage and backstage regions are clearly delineated and performers and audiences are strictly defined, social media is poised to erode these traditional barriers and role definitions. The restaurant, perceived as the quintessential dramaturgical forum, serves as an apt setting to examine these shifting dynamics. Through textual analysis and interviews, this study explores chefs’ use of Twitter and the spatial and relational implications of the platform’s adoption. Results suggest that the introduction of social media profoundly alters the role and elevates the status of the chef, but offers only an illusion of transparency that acts to further conceal and subjugate lower-level laborers.