

Paper 3: Topic Outline

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It was quite difficult to sit down and go over what Miguel Antunes and I believe to be consistent patterns in behaviour, even though we have been regular visitors of the coffee house for quite some time. It was a struggle between rational and objective things-we-know about the coffee house, and the “gut” feeling we get from the coffee house. Hence, the topic that we have selected is one of *attractors to the coffee house*.

What exactly attracts people and keeps them coming back to the coffee house? Based on what we know of the coffee house, and the limited data that we have collected on the coffee house since entering the site, all of the signs were pointing towards attraction of the clientele to the coffee house.

The collection of data is negligible. It seems that all we have to do is see who comes (as in what kind of people come) to the coffee house. There will be no formal interviews per se; when people are under the microscope, they tend to include or exclude things that are not important or things that are important respectively. Using informal interview practices, which may unfortunately be taken as “chatting someone up,” we can acquire more objective data about the individuals who frequent the shops.

The variables that might come into play for the attractors to the coffee house seem to be varied and random. But a quick brainstorming session was able to reveal a natural order of these so-called varied and random variables. Consider the following gross outline listing the various physical and meta-physical attractors to the coffee house:

1. Physical Attractors

- (a) Structure of the cafe. In a basic way, how it's built and how that affects the habits of the clientele and the wait-staff.
 - i. How does the layout help people do their work or study there.
 - ii. How does the layout help people gather in groups or alone to do this studying or work.
- (b) Micro and Macro spacial structure
 - i. Micro: how does the close interpersonal space (space that consists of everyone's "bubble") play out in the coffee house;
 - ii. Macro: how does the coffee house's dimensions play a role in the separation of public and private space. Is this something that attracts people to the coffee shop.
- (c) Locale: how does its locale affect the clientele. If this were a coffee shop on any other street (rather than South Street) would it attract as many people.

2. Meta-Physical Attractors

- (a) What role(s) do(es) the staff interaction with the clientele play in attracting and keeping customers coming back; how does the type of music played by the staff affect people who are there to just do some work?
- (b) How does the coffee house play out its role to some clientele as a meeting place, if not a study place?
- (c) Are there any "incestuous" communal ties with the coffee house that keep people coming back? On my first night there, I, serendipitously ran into some friends whom I haven't seen in a long time. Further, I ran into my research partner and his friends too.

The hypothesis that may be developed upon further research is that the role played by the interaction of these various physical and meta-physical forces foster an environment where people are lured and attracted to the coffee house. If these qualities were not there then *these* types of people would not be attracted to the coffee house. As a result, if the clientele of the coffee house would change, then the overall atmosphere would change fostering a vicious cycle of environmental change in a quite different direction than it is on now.