

**Now Serving Advancement Possibilities:
The Time-Pressured Work and Family
Lives of Middle-Class Managers
of Fast-Food Restaurants**

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Abstract

This paper examines the cases of five fast-food managers, focusing on the challenges of mobility in the secondary job market and how the weekly time commitment of fifty to sixty hours of management work, which often extends workweeks to six days, places pressure on family life. Despite these challenges and time pressures, the fast-food managers remain positive about the firm and advancement possibilities within it. This paper takes up the question of why these managers would tolerate unfair labor conditions and remain reluctant to challenge the family/work “time bind” and money squeeze in which the firm has placed them (Hochschild 1997). Their primary responsibilities of making customers and workers happy and advocating the potential for advancement tend to repress grievances against the firm’s intention of getting the most labor out of them for as little cost as possible. Bounded by the possibility of a promotion, managers are also averse to blaming the firm for exacting significant time costs in exchange for their higher salaries. The wait for potential possibilities urges them to offer present sacrifices for a future still unknown to them. They may talk about various financial challenges or time constraints and the toll these take on family life, but they fail to identify that the firm’s low cost labor strategy is responsible for their difficulties and the delay in achieving a better life.

Fast-food managers earn sufficient income to raise their family's living standard to "middle-class"; indeed, they often see themselves as successfully attaining the American dream of mobility. But advancement from low-wage service work to management is somewhat uncommon in the fast-food industry. Only a relative minority has actually climbed from the lower ranks and reached the management level. These rising managers have accomplished this difficult feat by accepting low-wages for many years until that rare management opportunity finally developed. Then, in exchange for a higher paid position in management, they must devote significantly more time to work than to their family. While managers experience this time pressure, the firm's strategy of offering promotion incentives to encourage positive attitudes among low-wage workers prevents them from fully acknowledging the limited number of advancement possibilities and the time costs that accompany higher positions in the secondary labor market. Moving up through the service economy involves a series of contradictions on the job and between work and family life.

This paper examines the cases of five fast-food managers, focusing on the challenges of mobility in the secondary job market and how the weekly time commitment of fifty to sixty hours of management work, which often extends workweeks to six days, places pressure on family life. Despite these challenges and time pressures, the fast-food managers remain positive about the firm and advancement possibilities within it. This paper takes up the question of why these managers would tolerate unfair labor conditions and remain reluctant to challenge the family/work "time bind" and money squeeze in which the firm has placed them (Hochschild 1997). It explores several possible explanations that derive from my own research on fast-food work and the relevant literature on service employment.

A Few Middle-Class Managers Among the Many Working Poor

The research in this paper draws from the experiences of five managers employed at the same fast-food chain in Oakland, California. It includes open-ended interviews with fifty-six nonmanagement (low-wage) employees in the chain, selected as a snowball sample, as well as participant observation that examined the daily operations and the organization of their work sites. The study focuses on the work mobility of ethnic minorities in secondary services,

including African American, Asian, and Latino research participants who work in Oakland restaurants located in poor minority neighborhoods. Fifty-six of the minority workers within the sample had low socioeconomic status and thus rank among the working poor within the urban service economy. However, five ethnic minority workers in the sample had combined family incomes above \$50,000 a year, clearly placing them in the middle-class. These five middle-class minorities are the store managers whose work experience and family life constitute the data analyzed for this paper.

Although the five managers and fifty-six low-wage workers in the sample were drawn from five different locations within the chain, the arrangement of four or five relatively highly paid managers who supervise fifty-six extremely low paid workers is representative of the normal staffing of a single fast-food restaurant. Each of the five locations within the study has between fifty-five and sixty-five low-wage workers, earning the minimum wage or no more than \$2 above it. Each restaurant also employs at least four to five store managers with yearly salaries ranging from \$20,000 to \$40,000, depending on management experience. One manager is an immigrant from Mexico, and the Latino, the African American, and the two Chinese American managers in the sample grew up in the same poor ethnic neighborhoods in which the restaurants are located. Among the myriad low-wage workers whom they supervise, these minority managers are the few who have accomplished the difficult climb into the middle-class. Therefore, the five salaried managers are “minorities” in more than one sense.

The Difficult and Lonely Climb Up

The firm’s goal of increasing the quality of worker service while depressing wages presents a significant barrier to mobility within secondary services. This goal explains why managers would receive unfair compensation for operating a restaurant that may gross several million dollars a year. Managers do earn considerably more than the everyday burger flipper, but they must commit their lives, especially in terms of time, to the firm. They put in over fifty hours a week without overtime pay and often work six days a week. After at least five to six years of fast-food management experience and severely low-wages, a top salary level of \$40,000 is possible. To help explain why managers would devote so much time, effort, and experience for

an inferior labor contract, I address several points concerning service quality, market demand, and the manager's role in improving worker performance.

The Conundrum of Raising Quality without Raising Wages

For service businesses, the two essential requirements for increasing quality and demand are low prices and friendliness between the service worker and customer. To meet the first requirement, service businesses increase demand by operating with mostly low-wage workers and only a handful of higher paid supervisors, thereby keeping costs at a "competitive" level. The second way to elevate demand is by enhancing the "emotional labor" (Hochschild 1983) implicit in service exchanges. If workers induce positive, happy feelings among customers, the firm improves its chances for customer loyalty. This partly explains why the employers in Waldinger's (1997) study of service industries cited "attitude" as the most important criterion for hiring low-wage workers.

However, "interactive services" (Liedner 1993) that require direct human contact between worker and customer confront the particular conundrum of paying workers low-wages while requiring them to be amiable with customers and maintain a positive attitude about work. With the standard monetary incentive of variable wage increases limited by cost reduction, the firm tends to address this conundrum through the incentive of promotion possibilities. Although internal labor markets are generally absent and a middle stratum of workers is diminutive in the urban service economy (Sassen 1998), the firm attempts to improve the quality of service work by creating the pretense or *myth* of an internal market. Believing that promotions are possible can motivate workers to maintain positive attitudes, and the manager's role in the firm is to sustain that belief.

The operative word is "myth" because the urban service economy lacks internal markets in any real sense of the term. As mentioned earlier, most secondary services operate with a majority of low-wage workers and a small minority of highly paid supervisors. An internal market characterized by a long promotion ladder--with entry-level positions and subsequent levels that ascend along a hierarchy of supervisory rungs--is mostly obsolete. Such internal markets engendered by extensive vertical economic organization were typical of the

manufacturing era. Yet the myth of an internal market remains intact and service managers utilizes it to encourage low-wage employees to adopt the firm's work philosophy of service with a smile.

Having compared managers' statements and extended observations of workplace experiences, I argue that internal markets operate in a conceptual or virtual form in fast-food restaurants--as an incentive that is false because the mobility ladder does not really exist. Managers have a specific role in developing this myth of an internal market. They motivate numerous low-wage workers to enhance their emotional labor by "pushing" the possibility of advancement without any real capacity to promote. This managerial role involves the strategic motive of labor control because it requires manipulating an employee's belief about the possibility of advancement and masking the firm's intention to retain most workers in the lowest wage category for as long as possible.

Happy and Smiley Managers, Workers, and Customers--All Holding Hands!

To instill positive attitudes among low-wage workers and thus succeed at their jobs, managers become key players in the firm's strategy of raising quality without raising wages. To implement this strategy, managers need to accomplish two goals. First, they must ensure workers understand that their principal task is to make the customer happy. Second, without necessarily offering monetary incentives, they must advocate the possibility of promotions to elevate the workers' enthusiasm while serving customers. When the firm attains these two goals, it maintains a high level of quality service that attracts customers and simultaneously expands profits through low labor costs.

Unfortunately, managers are pressed to uncritically accept the high-quality/low-wage strategy because their primary function is to meet its inherent goals. Their own performance at work inadvertently demands that they ignore the firm's latent intention of getting the most labor for the least amount, even to the point of denying how this profit-driven motive tends to push them hard as well without fair compensation. To explain how the function of fast-food management represses managers' critical response to the firm's strategy of exploitation, the two

goals of the high-quality/low-wage strategy need further explanation, and the manager's role in attaining these goals must be elucidated

The first goal requires managers to lay out what Arlie Hochschild (1983) calls the "feeling rules" for service work. Essentially, feeling rules are the "scripts" that tell us how we should feel according to the situation or social exchange (Hochschild 1983: 56-75). These scripts may be cultural norms that guide emotions while interacting with family, personal friends, intimate relations, or ethnic community members. For service work, scripts that describe feeling rules are institutionally mandated by proprietary interests and define the type of emotion work required for the job. The fast-food study revealed that feeling rules produce a discursive body of knowledge that informs workers of the skills necessary to excel. The skills in this case are "people skills," knowing how to satisfy customers and make them happy. This knowledge specifically embraces the idea that the emotion work of acting in a positive and ebullient manner is necessary to attain customer satisfaction and happiness.

The managers' specific role in disseminating the firm's discourse of people skills and customer satisfaction is to serve as the central mouthpiece. Low-wage employees in fast-food hear from managers on day one and consistently throughout their entire tenure that their main task is to make the customer happy. Managers inform their workers that this task is facilitated by presenting an emotionally positive, gleeful, and occasionally familial self to the customer. Arturo Luis, a twenty-three year-old Chicano manager from East Oakland, describes what his staff needs to know about skills in fast-food.

The number one priority is the customer; that's the most important thing. You really need good people skills, being able to interact well with people. For instance, if someone comes in, you want to say, "How are you doing?" Then you want to be personal with your customer; I want to know you on a first name basis. I'll get them to talk about themselves; I'll get to know them a little bit more, treat them like they're family. "Well, how's the married life and how are your kids" and that kind of thing. So I'm saying you got to have good people skills.

Arturo provides his staff with the vital information for successful fast-food service. Interestingly, it is not about selling the customer the right hamburger, but selling an emotional connection to the customer, a relationship that Arturo conceives of as somewhat familial and

personal. The worker's essential task is to conjure a feeling of familiarity, comfort, or home between him or her and the customer. The intention is to present an atmosphere in which the customer feels comfortable and experiences a sense of warmth that compels him or her not only to return but also to buy fast-food on a regular basis. This atmosphere of comfort and warmth manifests through the employee's concern for the customer, as if he or she were a family member.

Yet to construct an effective home like atmosphere, workers must avoid expressing superficial feelings. Rather, they must reach the customer on a genuine emotional level, or else the friendliness will appear false. April Davis, an African American fast-food manager in the study, explains how standard job training is insufficient for successful emotion work; it must come from a deeper and real place within the self.

I was trained to handle the fiscal operations of the store; I was trained by the owner and the manager and the supervisor. I was trained by them to do that. In terms of my customer relations skills, I got that from home. Although they do train and they have a way that they want you to treat customers, it would be very, very phony and artificial if there's no feeling behind the person. I'm the person who's taking the order, and I say, "Hi, can I help you?" [with a dull voice]. You're going to sound like an idiot unless there's some real rapport behind what you're saying.

To establish an effective connection and satisfy the customer with an emotional uplift, the exchange must appear personal and transpire with a fair amount of feeling. Thus, the atmosphere of comfort and warmth emerges when employees use "deep acting" as opposed to "surface acting" (Hochschild 1983: 35-55). Deep acting pulls from a real place internally within the self or borrows from personal memory. It exerts a true emotion or feeling for use in a performance or presentation, such as acting on stage, serving on a commercial flight, or taking orders at the counter. Surface acting is no more than a bodily gesture, such as a smirk or some other feigned expression, that conveys an appearance of feeling. The appearance, however, is usually perceived as "put on" (Hochschild 1983: 36). April would probably claim that surface acting would lead to the person sounding or appearing "like an idiot." Yet deep acting would produce that genuine home like atmosphere.

The manager's role in producing a home atmosphere in fast-food includes elevating happiness within the worker as well as the customers. April Davis asserts that her main priority is customer satisfaction, which entails spreading happiness throughout the store among customers and employees.

Our job is to make sure that if you come in, my job is, Ok--I have to make sure that my staff is happy. I am going to make it a pleasant working experience for them. If they're having a good time working, it will carry over to the customers they're serving. If I go in there and I have fun, if I get them to laugh--Come on! Come on! Come on! [snapping fingers while saying this]--we can do anything. It's going to carry over, and the customers are going to come back and come back and come back because that's the basis of our business, not the onetime person that comes in, but the people that keep coming back. That's what my goal is. My goal is to make sure that they come back. That's the main goal.

Creating customer satisfaction begins by establishing a pleasant work experience for the servers. Once the servers feel good, their happiness will infectiously spill over to the customer. In this scenario of enacting a pleasant atmosphere, the manager represents the director who shouts words of encouragement that motivate feelings of fun and happiness among the service performers.

Because verbal prompts go only so far, words that inspire a pleasant experience form just part of the method for uplifting worker attitudes. This brings the discussion to the second goal of advocating the possibility of promotions, which bolsters the strategy of raising quality without raising wages. The firm realizes the shortcomings of coaching; therefore, it implements a promotion system--the traditional mechanism for pulling employees into the company fold and raising their expectations of work (Reich, Gordon, and Edwards 1973). However (this point cannot be overstressed), promotions in fast-food are infrequent. Each store operates with only a few managers and many underpaid servers; this staffing structure is the basis of fast-food profit making and will not change anytime soon. Even so, the underpaid server is inundated constantly with the possibility of a promotion and asked to improve performance to attain one. Because their pay is so low, most workers would welcome the raise that accompanies the promotion. Workers strive for a promotion and better pay, but they are grasping for something that is

mythical. Although some move up the ranks, including the managers in this paper, the internal market in fast-food is no more than a simple myth because the overwhelming majority of fast-food employees remains at a salary level not much higher than the minimum wage (Van Giezen 1994).

Even with the structural reality of few highly paid positions, fast-food managers serve as the voice for the internal market myth by unceasingly advocating the possibility of advancement. April Davis comments on how she voices advancement possibilities to everyone:

I let them [low-wage employees] know that the company is acquiring more stores all the time, so it's an opportunity for advancement and advancement and advancement. I tell everyone, "There's no reason for you to stay at this level if you want. You can go as high as you want. What you want to do is up to you. It's up to you how far up you want to go!"

April understands the effect that this type of promotion baiting can have on a worker's attitude and performance. She states:

The more people that want to move up and that take a personal interest, the happier they are going to be, and the better the store's going to run.

It is a simple formula for augmenting the workers' enthusiasm and their general happiness at work: make them believe that room exists on the top for everyone and indicate that arriving there requires hard work and a positive attitude. Voicing the possibility of promotions assists managers with constructing the myth of the internal market.

In addition, the internal market myth emerges through the telling and retelling of that rare success story, which adds to the mythical quality of the internal market. Excited about some of these stories, Arturo proclaims:

There are stories that people have worked for fast-food as managers and bought their own store. I know this guy named Kay, Roger Kay. He just moved to Vallejo. I remember when Roger was in crew; I remember when he was a manager. And there's the owner of this store, Billy Ray. Billy started out working at fast-food, too. Billy worked right in there [pointing to the hamburger grill], and

he worked his way up to owner. That's what I want, you know. Somebody had to give these folks a break, but the most important thing is to stay the course until the timing is right.

The success of the owner of Arturo's restaurant is almost legendary. Billy Ray began as a burger flipper and worked his way up to own a fast-food restaurant. Now he is the owner of four others. Billy's story of success is told and retold numerous times to construct a discourse of the internal market. The power of the construction enralls Arturo to such an extent that he fails to recognize that the stories of Roger and Billy are rare. However, managers have reason to believe in the virtuousness of the firm and that advancement opportunities are frequent because they have witnessed how they moved up from the lower ranks. Consequently, managers hope that they will continue to proceed upwards. For Arturo to make that almost impossible and extraordinary move from flipper to owner requires that he realize the climb is less about hope and more about staying the course. Indeed, Billy's course involved more than twenty-five years of hard sacrifice.

It is in the area of time that the firm, aided by the internal market myth, places managers along with their staff in the category of labor that should be proficient and cheap. Similar to low-wage workers, managers are subjected to what Foucault would describe as the firm's "micro physics of power" (Rabinow 1984) that operates to extract the most time from individual workers with minimal cost to the firm, despite the worker's location in the organizational structure. Fast-food manager Antonio Rudolfo explains how much time is necessary to enter management:

It could be done in one year, two years. And that's just to get promoted to a shift manager who makes about \$8 an hour. Salaried manager is another level above that; with all the training, that could take another year or two.

In Antonio's estimation, attaining a high-salaried position in fast-food takes about two years, minimum. But this is much less than the time it took the managers in this study. Among the managers in my sample, Antonio took the least amount of time to climb--six years. April Davis had endured thirteen years of low-wages before attaining a management position. It takes nothing but time and many years of low-wages to move up in fast-food.

Antonio's perception that advancement happens quickly follows the firm's strategy of having workers, including managers, anticipate promotions that presumably occur within a reasonable length of time but in reality take considerably longer. This period of anticipation in which the employee waits for her advancement has specific advantages for the firm. The wait can be indeterminate at best, often taking several years, and the firm has the advantage of paying minimal wages to a hardworking employee striving to move up. What would press April to tolerate low-wages and wait thirteen years to be a manager and then accept unfair compensation for the additional responsibility? April gives her reason for staying:

Let me just say that I make around \$20,000 a year. Considering the length of time that I've been employed here, that's not a lot. Given the number of years and what I do, it's not a lot. But one day I will, I guarantee it, I will have my own business. These are the building blocks, Ok? Fast-food is a great educational tool for the future.

Antonio agrees with this assessment of the future potential of fast-food work.

If you are thinking about having your own business, this is the place to learn how to manage your own business. See, if I get enough money to open my own business, I will do it. Because I am learning so much in here, I know that I can use it someday to own my own business.

The notion that time and experience in fast-food will eventually reap higher returns, even if fast-food is not in the future, is so prevalent within the industry's discourse of opportunity that a recent television advertisement for a famous fast-food chain claims that "successful" people get their start there.

The discourse of the internal market myth permeates the entire firm, and many workers subjected to it believe that service with a smile and a great sacrifice of both time and money will somehow be rewarded in the distant future. As the anticipation of a promotion holds workers, the firm has the advantage of encouraging them, including managers, to improve their emotional labor and increase their commitment to the firm while paying them the least amount possible.

As a matter of consequence from ensuring customer and worker happiness, the five managers ignore the real challenges of advancing in service work and the firm's high-quality/low-cost labor strategy. The primary functions of making customers and workers happy through "deep acting," conjuring a real emotion of happiness, and continuously advocating the potential for advancement tend to repress grievances against the firm's intention of getting the most for less. Bounded by the myth's power of anticipation, managers are also averse to castigating the firm for exacting significant time costs in exchange for their higher salaries. The wait for potential possibilities urges them to offer present sacrifices for a future still unknown to them. They may talk about various financial challenges or time constraints and the toll these take on family life, but they fail to identify that the firm's labor strategies are responsible for their difficulties and the delay in achieving a better life. Besides the hold that the myth may have on managers, this lack of critical consciousness may derive partly from the fact that the managers originated from lower-class backgrounds and have become dependent on the firm to experience mobility.

The Challenges of Mobility and Time Commitments of Management

The climb upwards has not been easy or cost free for these managers. The impetus to depress wages across the board limits managers' salaries to a level that is insufficient to support a middle-class family life. To maintain this type of living standard, spouses, or other family members must contribute earnings from full-time work. Tom and Martha Chen, two Chinese American managers within the study, were recently married. As a wedding gift to themselves, they purchased a home in a quiet suburban area. Tom states:

Martha and I want to have a home that is close to our workplaces but making sure that the school system in our area is good for our kids. And unfortunately, Oakland schools are not the best.

However, Tom's salary alone is insufficient to solidify the opportunity to move out of Oakland and into a better area. To access a better school system, Martha works full-time managing another Oakland restaurant in the fast-food chain. Their combined income of \$55,000 is barely

enough for two fast-food managers to have the middle-class option of moving to a better and wealthier school district.

The move from city to suburbia comes with particular time costs for the fast-food managers. Dual-earner families may experience pressures of being overworked (Schor 1991), or time at work may eclipse time at home (Hochschild 1997). The “time bind” experienced in secondary services may be more intense for managers because job requirements include extensive yet flexible hours in an extremely stressful arrangement. Antonio realizes the incredible time sacrifice needed to provide the life he wants for his kids:

I wake up at 5:00 a.m. to open the store by six and then I come home sometimes eight or nine at night. Right now I am trying to make money; I really would like to make sure my kids have a decent education.

Weekly schedules can fluctuate between anywhere from fifty to over sixty hours, which may extend the workweek to six days. Tom comments about how the experience of long hours in fast-food management is reason for him to seek a change of occupation.

I want to do something else down the road. But it's on a personal level because I am married. I need to balance business and personal life. I am sacrificing my personal life because I am at work sometimes fifteen to sixteen hours a day, and some days my wife's at home by herself.

Perhaps the most problematic time commitment for salaried service managers is that they must work flexible hours. The flexible time strategy for fast-food labor has a more negative influence on the worker than the term “flexibility” might initially suggest; all fast-food workers in the study, including the five salaried managers, have hardly any control over work hours. Managers set and change the schedules for every employee, including themselves, each week according to the fluctuations in business. Plus, managers are on call during normal operating hours. In effect, planning regular or consistent periods outside of work to spend time with family becomes almost impossible. Martha Chen states:

I open the pager forever, twenty-four hours a day, no matter what. You call me; I call the store right away. I spend a lot of time at the store; it's common for me to come in on some of my days off from work. . . . Tom and I understand that working for fast-food requires long hours, so we are going to miss each other sometimes.

Because they are both fast-food managers, Tom complains that it is difficult to spend time with Martha because they cannot synchronize their separate flexible schedules.

Unfortunately, we both want to balance our schedules so we can have time together. Our schedules are flexible right now, where we desperately need balance. Now we just hope that we have the same days off so we can have a good quality life together. But we never know if one week is going to be good or the next bad.

With the uncertainty surrounding the number and schedule of weekly hours, Tom questions whether quality of life will match the elevation of his economic status.

For these managers, work may become family, but family may also become irrelevant. April lives with several family members to share expenses and sustain home ownership in a quiet suburb. Feeling somewhat guilty about time missed with family, April states:

When I'm done, I go home and try to spend time with my mom and my brothers and sister. If they are home or still up. I feel like I'm neglecting them a lot because I spend so much time at the store.

The rise of the urban service economy and the demand to control and constantly change work hours suggest that families with service workers may suffer from the strain of intrafamilial neglect. Revealing how the firm will not make sacrifices to enhance the quality of family life for its employees, Antonio states:

This summer I took my kid to Camp Hideaway. Cost me \$225 dollars just to send him there for one week up at Merritt College, and I ain't telling you what it cost me to go pick him up every day. I made our schedule at work so crazy, but that's what he wanted to do. And I want to be in a situation to do things differently than my parents didn't do for me.

To make at least one week special for his child, Antonio sacrifices earnings by reducing his time spent at work. This sacrifice is major, considering that managers' salaries are barely sufficient for staying above water. The firm denies one week of family-friendly flexibility (in a positive sense) during which a devoted manager has time for his child without losing critical earnings. Ironically, the job of a service manager is to ensure that low-wage workers have an emotionally positive connection with customers, but time commitments of management work leave the manager little time to cultivate positive relationships with family members.

Despite the personal sacrifices of both time and money, managers remain positive about the firm and avoid identifying its high-quality/low-cost labor strategy as the source of their time and money binds. Throughout their interviews, managers made statements that indicated how grateful they were for their opportunity. They revealed a genuine enthusiasm for the firm and held in high regard the potential that fast-food has as a long-term employer. Pondering the worth of his fast-food opportunity, Arturo states:

Well, you'll see as you get older, it's about the money. You know, if I weren't making enough money for being in fast-food, I wouldn't be there. If I weren't making enough money, cause you're not going to pay me \$8 an hour to manage no store, you're going to pay me \$10 dollars an hour to manage a store. I know what I'm supposed to be making. That's what I'm going to make, and Billy's [store owner] been very good to me and keeps it. Right when I had the baby, he gave me another raise and gave me a bonus, too; that's so I won't leave. So it made it convenient.

Arturo seems unaware of his true value as a manager who runs the entire operation for an extremely successful business. He puts in more than fifty hours a week at work, changes his schedule every week, comes in sometimes on his off days, and earns no more than \$20,000 (net after taxes) a year to support a family of four. With all his responsibility and effort, Arturo seems extraordinarily appreciative for his meager earnings, to the point of becoming steadfastly loyal to the firm. Similarly, Tom Chen speaks highly of the benefits of fast-food work.

This job [fast-food] is better in comparison to my previous job as hotel resident manager. I'd go home at one in the morning and I would leave at five in the

morning. Now I have a lot of time to go out and find my wife and stuff like that and have the time to be with my family and have time to go home and sleep. This is a pretty good job, more benefits to this job compared to the last.

This statement contradicts others from Tom's interview presented earlier in which he indicates that the long hours of fast-food might persuade him to seek other employment and fifteen to sixteen hour workdays keep him at work and away from home and wife. The contradictory statements, in Tom's case, may result from moving into the lesser evil of two types of service employment. Surely, the work experience of resident management would eclipse the presence of home in one's life. In this job, work is unequivocally home. In comparison, any job, including fast-food, appears as a step up. For Tom, this jump does not negate the fact that fast-food work includes serious time pressures.

Conclusion

It is possible to conclude from Tom's statements that insufficient pay for the responsibility of management as well as the time-pressured costs for higher positions in the firm are acceptable because better employment options rarely exist in the general job market. This may be the case for the managers in this study; they are racial minorities with humble beginnings and no college degrees. Their market value suggests that good opportunities for them would be hard to access. Fast-food or any service management position, in the face of difficult odds, seems like an acceptable opportunity. It is no wonder managers seem grateful.

However, an analysis of manager interviews and observations of their workplace reveal aspects of management work that tend to bring managers into the fold and repress any critical feelings they may have about their fast-food jobs. To satisfy the firm's high-quality/low-cost labor strategy, they must ensure that their staff attains the goal of customer satisfaction and happiness without relying solely on monetary incentive. Instead of raises and high wages, managers use false promotion possibilities and their own feelings of happiness to motivate low-paid servers. The internal market myth fosters positive attitudes among low-wage workers. But managers are also subject to the myth's discourse of opportunity, preventing them from fully acknowledging that their time and money binds derive directly from the industry strategy to

depress wages and control time. Their jobs require them to “push” and believe in the possibility of advancement so that fast-food employees, including themselves, feel positive about their jobs and work with a smile.

With emotion work required to generate happy feelings, managers apply “deep acting” (Hochschild 1983) to pull from themselves positive emotions that create a home like atmosphere and bring happiness to both workers and customers. No doubt, deep acting is a performance enacted for business purposes. Nonetheless, its tendency to merge private feelings (memories of home) with public actions (fast-food service) renders the workplace an environment perceived more as an ally than a threat to family life. Our concern should not be that managers are asked to turn a fast-food restaurant into “home”. Rather, with the expansion of service industries and the heavy reliance on emotion labor, “the emotional system itself—emotion work, feelings rules, and social exchange . . . will grow in importance as a way through which people are controlled both on the job and off” (Hochschild 1983: 160). It is a serious concern that service managers must feel a certain way to do their work correctly, and this requirement may repress any criticism of the firm’s intention to get the most time from them with as little cost as possible. Without the mandatory requirement to love the job, managers would be apt to describe secondary service work as offering only partial access to the American dream and time commitments that are family hostile.

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