Fall 2007

The disneyization of service work in financial organizations

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THE DISNEYIZATION OF SERVICE WORK IN FINANCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

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B.A., Saint Anselm College, 2004

THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts
In
Sociology

September, 2007

This thesis has been examined and approved.

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August 6, 2007
Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

THE DISNEYIZATION OF SERVICE WORK IN FINANCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

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In recent years, financial companies have adopted "the Disney Way" in their approaches to customer service. Along with other organizations, financial companies place emphasis on the service they provide and are training associates to stage a "show" for their customers. Financial organizations increasingly look toward Disney as a model for customer "delight", and use Disney's methods of training to mold associates who are constantly smiling and friendly, use a company-written script, and "perform" as part of their job duties.

My study investigates the nature of performance-based customer service through a content analysis of bank teller employment advertisements and banking advertisements from the New York Times, spanning the years of 1975-2005. Results of my analysis, when combined with additional evidence of the "disneyization" phenomenon, show that there is an increasing emphasis on customer service within the banking industry.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 50 years, the United States economy has transformed from a goods-producing, to a service-based economy (Gutek 2003; Northcraft and Chase 1985; Tausky 1996). In recent years, a new type of economy has emerged from the service economy; one that has generally not been distinguished from service work. Researchers use the term "experience economy" to describe the new type. The main premise of the experience economy is that companies use "services as a stage and goods as props to engage an individual" (Pine and Gilmore 1999:11). Goods and services still exist, but they are used to create an *experience* for a client or customer. Companies now strive to create experiences that are memorable for consumers and therefore keep them coming back.

One of the many examples of corporations' efforts to create a memorable customer experience is evident in the financial world. In recent years, financial companies have begun to adopt "the Disney Way" in their approaches to customer service. Along with retailers, hospitals, universities, and U.S. government departments, financial companies are placing emphasis on the service they provide and are training associates to stage a "show" for their customers or clients (Our Clients 2007). The Disney Company markets its customer service approach to other institutions through the "Disney Institute". The Disney Institute is a training site where Disney offers workshops to organizations interested in learning more about their approach to customer service. Financial companies are increasingly looking toward Disney as a model for customer "delight". These companies use Disney's methods of training to mold associates who are constantly smiling and friendly, use a company-written script, and "perform" as part of their job duties. Performance-based customer service was not always valued andpromoted by companies to the extent that it is today, and the emergence of this trend and its application remain under-studied within academia.

Within the social sciences, little attention has been paid to the process of attracting and retaining customers by using performance methods. The few researchers who have studied performance-based service have focused mainly on the nuances of working in a particular type of service job, or on "service" as a broad category (Rafaeli 1989; Sass 2000). For instance, Rafaeli (1989) describes the ways in which supermarket cashiers are torn between the differing expectations of their managers and their customers. Sass (2000) studied caregivers working at nursing homes and the ways in which they used certain forms of emotional labor, such as "rapport-building", in their interactions with residents. Rafaeli's (1989) and Sass's (2000) studies mainly used surveys, observations, and/or interviews, to examine the particulars of a specific job type at one point in time, instead of changes in that job with respect to customer service *over* time. Generally, financial institutions have been excluded from academic research on customer service. Although individual companies and market research firms investigate customer service, within the academic literature, studies related to the recent change in service provision among financial institutions are scarce.

Using a neoinstitutional framework, especially the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1991), my study investigates the nature of customer service within financial organizations. I aim to demonstrate how the financial industry is becoming more like other industries (for example, the entertainment industry, the retail industry, and so forth) in its adoption of a "performance-based" approach and emphasis on the customer experience in its business strategy. The research question investigated in my study is: "Has there been a change in the nature of customer service within financial institutions over the past thirty years, and if so, what is the nature of this change?" Specifically, I hypothesize that there *has been a change in customer service* over the past thirty years, and that the change in customer service involves *an increasing emphasis on service over other aspects of the job duties of a financial service worker.* For instance, a bank teller may need to focus more on the behaviors of smiling and befriending a customer than on the skills it takes to process a deposit. I then hypothesize that *the emphasis on service manifests itself in required behaviors meant to create a memorable experience for a customer.* Through a content analysis of employment ads for bank tellers spanning 1975-2005, and a separate content analysis of banking advertisements aiming to attract customers during the same time period, I investigate the prevalence and nature of the change in emphasis to service.

The change in emphasis from mechanical processes to service is important because it carries with it implications not only for the individual worker, but for society as a whole. The presence and operation of organizations is one of the most important aspects of modern society (Scott 2003:3) and they exert considerable influence over social life. Any organizational change reflects a broader social change, and so it is necessary to understand and explain significant ways in which these organizational changes occur. In addition, we are all customers, and so the changes investigated in my study are applicable not only to limited groups of people, but to everyone who lives and works in the modern economy.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND ON SERVICE

The Evolution of Customer Service

The Service Economy

Most people today work in service professions, and our economy is classified as a "service" economy (Gutek 1999:603). Instead of a goods-producing economy, which is based on the manufacture of tangible goods, a service economy is based upon companies' or individuals' (intangible) provision of services to a client. Because these two types of economies are so different, it is necessary to understand the basis for the distinction between goods and services and how that distinction affects consumer relationships.

Goods vs. service. The transformation to a service (instead of a goods-producing) economy in the United States has been widely documented (Gutek 2003; Northcraft and Chase 1985; Tausky 1996). During the first half of the 20th century, the majority of work was in the manufacturing industry. Beginning in the 1950s, the majority of workers were employed in service jobs rather than in goods-producing (manufacturing) jobs (Tausky 1996:52; Pine and Gilmore 1999:8). Since the 1950s, the percentage of workers employed in service occupations has risen to approximately 80 percent (Pine and Gilmore 1999:8).

In a goods-producing industry, companies use raw materials to manufacture goods for the purpose of selling them. For instance, a company that makes cars uses raw materials to produce a tangible good, a vehicle, which is then sold. Jobs within the service industry, however, are characterized as "intangible activities customized to the individual request of known clients" (Pine and Gilmore 1999:8). Instead of a good, which is something tangible that is produced, a service is an *activity*. Goods are used as part of or to provide a service, but the service is the main element. For example, at a restaurant, food is the good that is served, but the service itself is what characterizes the job. In a similar way, when a person goes to get a haircut, scissors (a "good" that has been manufactured) are used to perform a *service*, the haircut itself.

Today, the vast majority of all employed Americans work in some type of service job (Gutek 1999:604). Some occupations classified as service sector positions include: nurses, hair stylists, lawyers, gardeners, college professors, and cashiers (Gutek 1999:604). Individuals who are employed in service positions work closely with others. Because their jobs require frequent contact with clients, many service providers must be able to manage the way they act. Oftentimes, service providers need to behave in ways that require them to stifle their own emotions.

Emotional labor. Arlie Hochschild (2003) defines the term "emotional labor" as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value" (p. 7). In other words, a service employee's emotions are controlled by his or her employer in order to create a certain impression for the customer. An example of emotional labor is the requirement by many employers that their service workers consistently smile as part of their job duties. For example, at Disney World, if an employee is "on stage" (visible to and interacting with customers) and not smiling, even to difficult customers, he or she will be reprimanded (Bryman 2004:109). Workers are not only paid for providing a service, but for smiling and displaying company-mandated emotions. The requirement that employees control their emotions is seen as economically necessary by many companies. It creates a memorable experience for customers, and keeps them coming back and also referring their families and friends. These companies believe that the way to keep customers is not only to satisfy them, but to "delight" them (Cox and Bossert 2005:24).

Customer service is a subcategory of service occupations (BLS 2006:1) that frequently requires the emotional labor of employees. These associates often have to put their personal emotions aside in order to perform their job, which involves acting according to company specified scripts, smiling, and engaging the customer. As Hochschild explains, "in processing people, the product is a state of mind" (2003:6). In a service interaction, employees must generally strive to create a positive state of mind for the customer. A customer service representative manages his or her own emotions- suppressing personal emotions and displaying other, company-mandated ones- to elicit a positive response from the customer.

<u>Customer service.</u> According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, customer service representatives "interact with customers to provide information in response to inquiries about products or services and to handle and resolve complaints" (2006:1). Customer service providers use face-to-face interaction, telephone, email, or mail (or, a combination of these) in their communications with customers. In 2004, 2.1 million jobs in the United States were characterized as customer service jobs. Among these jobs, approximately 25% are jobs within the finance and insurance industries (BLS 2006:4). The number of individuals working in customer service jobs grows annually, and is expected to grow at a rate "faster than the average" for all occupations through 2014 (BLS 2006: 5). Because of the exponential growth in customer service, the implications of the particular nuances of employment within these types of jobs is important for social scientists, employers, and policymakers to understand.

In many types of service work, an employee has an ongoing relationship with a client. When a person goes to the same hair stylist, for example, the employee and client know each other to some extent. However, in other types of service work, such as customer service, the formation of a relationship is generally not possible. For instance, when a customer goes into a bank, he or she may not interact with the same bank teller on every visit. Though oftentimes it is not possible for customers to form a personal relationship with employees, they *can* form a "pseudorelationship" with the company itself.

"Pseudorelationships". Gutek (1999) distinguishes between a "service relationship" and a "service encounter". A service relationship is a relationship where a service provider and a customer know each other and regularly interact. Traditionally, relationships were the basis of service transactions. Though not as common today, these service relationships still exist. For example, when a person goes to the same primary care physician, the physician and the client have a service relationship. Service *encounters*, however, take place at one point in time between a service provider and a customer who do not know each other and do not expect to interact again. The service providers are "interchangeable" (Gutek 1999:605). Because the providers are interchangeable, it does not matter whether the customer has a personal relationship with the service representative, since each and every associate who works in that role provides the same type of service.

An additional type of relationship called the "pseudorelationship" is formed when a *company* tries to establish a relationship with its customers. Because a customer cannot always form relationships with individual employees, companies attempt to make the customer feel as though he or she has a relationship with their corporation. An example illustrating the pseudorelationship is "brand loyalty"- customers often return to a familiar company, such as McDonalds. A customer's return is most often not because the customer has a relationship with any one *person* who works for that company, but because the customer is familiar with the *company* itself (Gutek 1999:606). Failure to recognize the difference between these two types of situations can be counterproductive for a company seeking to form a relationship with its customers, because

> companies that fail to recognize the difference between a relationship and an encounter often attempt to 'personalize' service encounters by requiring service providers to smile, make eye contact, or address the customer by name. But these do not substitute for a history of shared interaction and may be viewed as inappropriate by some customers. A personalized encounter is an oxymoron (Gutek 1999:607).

In other words, within pseudorelationships, employees often have to make an effort (the particulars of which are specified by the company) to make the customer *feel* as though he or she has an actual relationship with the employee, when in fact the two people share no history. Attempts by service employees to personalize service encounters can be seen by many customers as intrusive or "fake".

Gutek also suggests that interactions between a service representative and customer who are strangers are "a by-product of the modern service economy" and are increasingly common (1999:603). Whether we are in a supermarket, a restaurant, a bank, or on the phone with a credit card company, we interact with others who we do not know and may not ever have contact with again. It is common to have dozens of interactions per day with people we do not know, and this is an important characteristic of today's society.

Because impersonal interactions between individuals who do not know one another are so common, companies are always trying to find new ways to attract and keep customers. Customers have many options when choosing a grocery store, a bank, or any other place to conduct business with, and for businesses to succeed it has become necessary to take innovative steps to keep their customers (Disney Institute 2001:12-13). One of the ways in which companies are insuring that their customers stay is through an attempt to "entertain" a customer so that he or she feels an emotional connection to the company. An "entertainment approach" to service makes sense for an organization such as Disney, which is entertainment-oriented. However, an attempt to entertain customers is also being used widely across many other types of institutions in an effort to attract and keep customers. I aim to demonstrate that there has been an increasing prevalence of entertainment approaches to customer service over the past several decades.

In entertaining customers, the experience the customer has is important. Many industries, including banks, focus on the customer's *experience*, whether it is face-to-face, on the phone, or through the internet. The way in which a customer experiences the service a company provides is important, because it will influence whether he or she returns to do more business with that company. Because a positive experience is so important, banks and other institutions strive to "create" an experience for the customer, similar to the approach Disney uses to create an experience for visitors to Walt Disney World. A focus on experience is not present in all service interactions, and is exclusive to a different kind of service where the company, through particular *methods* of serving a customer, seeks to create a memorable interaction and in doing this ensures a returning customer (Pine and Gilmore 1999).

The Experience Economy

Though not all service jobs require acting as a part of the job duties, the "experience" a customer has in relation to a particular service interaction is becoming increasingly important to companies. In creating an experience, "performance" is the key. Researchers make a distinction between services and experiences. Though experiences have always existed, they are distinct from a service in that "when a person buys a service, he purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. But when he buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages- as in a theatrical play- to engage him in a personal way" (Pine and Gilmore 1999:2). Walt Disney is cited as the catalyst of the "experience economy" in which a customer is not only entertained, but "engaged" by a company that stages the experience so the customer remembers it fondly (Pine and Gilmore 1999:3).

Types of economic offerings. Pine and Gilmore (1999) use the example of coffee to distinguish between four types of "economic offerings"- commodity, good, service, and experience. Their example is worth noting because it helps to clarify their main ideas. An example of a commodity is a coffee bean. When coffee beans are ground, packaged, and sold, these coffee beans become a "good". Then, when coffee is brewed from these beans in a coffee shop or restaurant, the beans are sold as a "service" and the price of the coffee becomes even more expensive. Taken to the next level of value, when companies serve coffee in an upscale restaurant or shop with a specific sense of "ambiance", the consumer pays even more for the coffee beans that were originally a commodity. Thus, the consumer pays not just for the coffee but for the *experience*.

Experience vs. service. While a service is something intangible provided to an individual (such as a cell phone contract, or a haircut), an *experience* "occurs whenever a company intentionally uses services as a stage and goods as props to engage an individual" (Pine and Gilmore 1999:11). For example, when a customer goes to a bank to deposit money, the service provided is the transaction. However, if a bank is also interested in creating an *experience* for that customer, the company will want to make that experience a memorable one. In order to make the experience memorable, the bank will strive to "stage" the experience by offering free coffee in the lobby, or using aesthetically pleasing colors. In addition, there may be a "greeter" at the door to welcome the customer, and the teller might be smiling and use a specific script when conversing with the customer. These features are implemented by companies to create an experience for the customer that is so pleasant that he or she will remember it, return, and encourage others to do business with that company as well.

Pine and Gilmore suggest that "every business is a stage" and that entertainment organizations such as theaters and theme parks are now competing with other organizations such as banks, airlines, and hotels (1999:162). While it may not make sense for a bank to be the setting for a play, customers are increasingly encountering theater-like experiences in their everyday interactions with those working in many different types of organizations. The banking industry is one of many that now attempts to attract customers by entertaining them. The aim of my study is to prove that the transformation to "entertainment" customer service has occurred in the banking industry.

Changes in the Banking Industry

The distinction between an "experience economy" and a "service economy" has not been widely recognized within academic literature, and I was unable to find sources regarding the prevalence of experience jobs versus service jobs. However, I will demonstrate that even though the experience economy and its implications have been under-investigated, the process of change from a focus on goods to the experience a customer has, has indeed taken place. Using both examples of companies that use certain "theatrical techniques", and the findings from a content analysis of banking advertisements and employment advertisements for bank tellers, I aim to show the change to emphasis on a customer's experience.

Because the banking industry is the focus of my research, it is necessary to describe some of the changes that have taken place within the industry over the past several decades. Several technological developments have changed the nature of customer relations within the banking industry, and these developments are important in a discussion of the results of the study. These developments include the ATM, direct deposit, and online banking.

Automated Services

History of the ATM. The ATM (automated teller machine) was a revolutionary invention that has allowed customers to perform their own banking transactions (for example, making deposits or withdrawals), thus eliminating the need to have a bank teller perform these transactions. The first ATMs began appearing in the 1960s. Some of these only allowed for deposits, and were only available during normal banking hours. Some of the first cash-dispensing ATMs were developed in England, though the earliest ones were quite tedious by today's standards. A customer would purchase an encoded card from a bank teller, in a specific amount, and then use it at the ATM later on (Lamm 2000).

The ATM that most closely resembles those we are familiar with today was developed by Donald C. Wetzel, working for a company named Docutel (Lamm 2000). Despite some technical problems, in 1969 some banks began buying Wetzel's machines and installing them. By 1973, approximately 2,000 ATMs were operating throughout the United States (Lamm 2000). As of the year 2000, this number had grown to approximately 190,000 (Lamm 2000). A customer can now make a deposit, withdraw money, check account balances, and transfer funds between accounts using an ATM.

Other services. Another significant technological development that brought with it implications for the banking industry was that of online banking. A customer can now check balances and transfer funds online. Online access to banking is growing rapidly, and is expected to continue (Keaton 2001:29). In addition, many customers have their paychecks deposited directly into their bank accounts, thus eliminating the need to go to the bank, or even an ATM, and cash or deposit it.

Implications of Automated Services

The development of the ATM and online banking has not only made banking more convenient- they also save banks money. ATMs are more cost-effective for a bank than tellers, costing on average 26 cents per transaction as compared to 1.56 per bank teller transaction (Wells and Wolfers 2000:33). Despite the cost-effectiveness of technology, banking executives today recognize that there is still a need to pay close attention to their relationships with customers.

Many of the smaller, local banks had been resistant to the idea of the ATM at first. One of the reasons for resistance to the ATM was because of the loss of contact between a bank teller and a customer (Lamm 2000). Even so, in the 1990s, many banks had closed branches because they were hoping that customers would use ATMs and computers. However, they soon discovered that many people still enter the bank occasionally, even if they use ATMs, online banking, or direct deposit. Others prefer not to use these technological advances, and always go to a banking center when they need to make a specific transaction. Because so many people still enter an actual banking center, banks reconsidered their approach (Consumer Reports 2006). One of the main ways that banks have changed their approach is by focusing on customer service.

Today, because many customers are accessing accounts in remote ways, attracting and keeping customers is more complicated. Some people rarely enter into a bank, so when they do, it has to be a memorable visit. Customers' ability to access accounts from outside a bank has created the necessity to make impressions in other ways, for example with the creation of an attractive website. Many ATMs are available

24 hours a day, so banking can be done outside of normal banking hours. The ability to bank at anytime, coupled with the increasing prevalence of online banking, has created a new kind of challenge for banks in terms of attracting customers.

In a discussion of the challenges banks face in recent years of connecting to their customers, Wells and Wolfers (2000) write that a bank's strategy should be to "recapture...personalized service to the customer" (p. 32). In a society where most consumer relationships take the form of "pseudorelationships", a personalized encounter seems somewhat counterintuitive. However, the process by which financial companies strive to create a personal encounter makes financial sense to them. My study will demonstrate that these companies have gravitated toward an emphasis on personalized service, a process which has become increasingly prevalent over the past several decades.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Neoinstitutionalism

Isomorphism

Neo-institutionalism is a framework used to study organizations. According to neo-institutionalism, organizations become more alike because they are all part of a bigger environment and need to survive by legitimizing themselves. According to Max Weber, bureaucratization was a result of competition between organizations. Organizations became more alike in their efforts to compete with one another in the marketplace and competition became the driving force that caused organizations to strive for efficiency and legitimacy. The end result of the competition was that organizations become more homogeneous (DiMaggio and Powell 1991:63).

As part of the neoinstitutional framework for organizational studies, however, DiMaggio and Powell (1991) have written that today, change in organizational structures is not a result of the competition described by Weber. Instead, there are certain processes (coercive, normative, and mimetic) by which organizations become models of one another, taking what seems to work for another organization and using that within their own structures. According to DiMaggio and Powell, by these processes "highly structured organizational fields provide a context in which individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead, in the aggregate, to homogeneity in structure, culture, and output" (1991:64). In other words, organizations become more like others within their respective fields because they use the same types of methods to improve organizational performance, and as these ways become part of the mainstream and are "normatively sanctioned", it makes organizations more similar. Organizations become less diverse over time because eventually, they are using the same techniques that have become entrenched into their organizational cultures. This process is referred to as "isomorphism".

DiMaggio and Powell (1991) outline the process of isomorphism in reference to organizational fields. An organizational field is defined as a group of organizations that are commonly recognized and "produce similar services or products" (p. 65). For the purposes of my research, the "banking industry" as a whole will be considered an organizational field. A single banking corporation, such as Bank of America, is an individual organization within the "banking industry" field. The Disney Company will be considered an organization within the "entertainment" organizational field.

Types of Isomorphism

There are three ways in which the institutional isomorphism change occurs: coercive, normative, and mimetic (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). Each type of isomorphism refers to a different kind of organizational process. It is important to note that many of the elements of each process can overlap and organizational change can result from a combination of reasons.

Coercive. Organizations do not exist in isolation. They exist in relation to other organizations and as part of a larger society. Coercive isomorphism is the process by which organizations change due to their dependence upon other organizations and on societal expectations (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). The coercive process results because organizations are dependent upon other social structures, such as government, and must conform due to the application of the same laws, and so forth. Pressures from other organizations can include laws and other government mandates, when an organization changes certain aspects of business to conform to regulations. The changes that are implemented in order to conform to regulations often take the same form across organizations of a given field, and this is makes them more similar. For instance, DiMaggio and Powell (1991) give the example of schools that employ professionals to work with special needs students. In order to comply with state regulations, schools must hire these professionals, thus making schools similar to one another.

Normative. Normative isomorphism results from "professionalization" (DiMaggio and Powell 1991:70). In the normative process, organizations become more alike because of similar socialization and norms among professionals working for different organizations. People attend the same types of schools and belong to the same professional organizations. They are socialized in the same ways, and then go out to work for different organizations, which become more alike because they have the same types of people (who have internalized the same norms) working for them. These people also end up in the same *types* of positions, bringing with them the norms that they have internalized in their training and associations. As a result, organizations are run in similar ways by professionals with the same norms and values.

Another aspect of normative isomorphism is that elements including style of dress and behavior standards are part of an orientation outlining expectations of the organization, and these elements are similar within a particular field. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) suggest that these similar elements are particularly true of professionals working for service and financial organizations. Because professionals are selected from the same kinds of schools and chosen for the same types of attributes, "they will tend to view problems in a similar fashion, see the same policies, procedures, and structures as normatively sanctioned and legitimated, and approach decisions in much the same way" (DiMaggio and Powell 1991:72). Because these professionals' views are so similar, the ways in which they run their organizations are also the same. Over time, similar procedures implemented by professionals (who have been socialized in the same ways) infiltrate into the culture of the organizations, making them more alike.

Mimetic. Mimetic isomorphism is a result of *uncertainty* (DiMaggio and Powell 1991:69). Executives from organizations, when faced with a problem for which the solution is unclear, look to other organizations within their field that they see as more successful (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). They then use practices borrowed from other organizations as a model in improving their own organization. DiMaggio and Powell explain that, as a result of uncertainty, organizations will model themselves after one another and that the larger the organization is, it is more likely that those in charge will look to the ways in which other organizations conduct their business as a model (1991:70). The more expansive an organization is, the more pressure it feels to "fit in" and give its clients or customers what seem to be the expected standards.

Banking Organizations and Institutional Isomorphism

The process described in my study is that of banking organizations adopting the customer service principles of the entertainment industry and striving to create a relationship with their customers. The theory of isomorphism can be used to explain why banking organizations adopt entertainment principles. In particular, the mimetic and the normative elements of isomorphism can be applied.

As outlined above, institutional isomorphism refers to the convergence of structures becoming more alike in their efforts to achieve rationality. By examining both employment advertisements for bank tellers and banking advertisements designed to attract customers, it is my aim to show that banking organizations are adopting principles of customer service that are part of a new type of economy- the *experience* economy. The experience economy draws on precepts used by other organizations, not just within the banking industry, but especially outside of it, in organizations like the Disney Company. It focuses on quality service and relationship-building between a customer and the organization, elements which are found in Disney's service principles.

The Mimetic Process and Banks

Of the three processes of isomorphism, the mimetic can be used to best explain why banks imitate Disney's customer service principles. As part of the mimetic process, organizations copy certain elements of other organizations they view as more successful. If banks are indeed focusing on the same types of customer service elements as Disney, one of the top customer service providers in the world (Capodagli and Jackson 1999:59), then the imitation could be because banks see Disney's service principles as superior to their own and therefore worth mimicking.

The mimetic process is described as not always "conscious" on part of these organizations- instead, many organizations become more similar because "models may be diffused unintentionally, indirectly" (DiMaggio and Powell 1991:69). However, in the case of organizations in industries other than the entertainment industry modeling the Disney Company, this is a very conscious process. Organizations that are seemingly dissimilar to Disney attend the Disney Institute, and attribute many of their developments to the Disney Company. The fact that these companies openly attribute their adoption of Disney's principles, to be shown in the following chapter, is even more evidence pointing to an admiration of Disney's perceived legitimacy, which can be explained by the process of mimetic isomorphism.

The Normative Process and Banks

The process of normative isomorphism also can be applied to the reasons financial companies would model Disney. It is plausible that the same types of people end up in banking management positions for different banking organizations, and that these people are more likely to adopt the same kinds of customer service principles. DiMaggio and Powell suggest that these people also belong to the same kinds of professional organizations (1991:70), thus allowing for dialogue about innovations and about which organizations are perceived as most successful.

As previously mentioned in relation to normative isomorphism, professionals working within service or financial organizations are especially likely to run their companies the same ways (DiMaggio and Powell 1991:72) This similarity is of particular importance to my study, because service in financial organizations is its focus. Because financial executives see the same procedures as normatively sanctioned, they have decided to implement a new way of serving customers. Not only have many of the top executives of these banks been socialized in the same way and been chosen for the same attributes, they also are likely to read the same trade magazines, serve on industry-wide boards or councils, and belong to the same professional and trade organizations (DiMaggio and Powell 1991:72).

Separate Organizational Fields

Finance and entertainment. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) discuss the process of isomorphism mainly in terms of organizations modeling themselves after other organizations within their own field. Interestingly, the Disney Company is not primarily a financial institution; rather, it is part of the entertainment industry. However, companies outside of the entertainment industry see Disney's approach to customer service as successful enough to "mimic". Therefore, it is possible that the idea of "mimetic isomorphism" could be extended to not only similar institutions, but also to institutions or a different type. Disney markets its customer service approach with the idea that every organization has the same goal- to serve customers and "create service magic" (Disney Institute 2001:22). In turn, the organizations that model Disney emphasize the similarities between themselves and Disney.

Disneyization across fields. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) emphasize that some practices that are rational for some organizations may not necessarily be rational if many other organizations adopt those practices. Because those same practices are a norm, however, it is more likely that other organizations will adopt them, even if it is not "rational" to do so. This idea can be expanded to organizations from different fields. For instance, though Disney's approach may "make sense" for their own institution, in that their goal is to "entertain", their legitimacy as a customer service model has prompted other institutions to adopt their precepts, whether or not it "makes sense" to do so within the context of their own organizations.

Disney is widely recognized as being successful and its customer service principles have indeed been adopted by a diverse group of organizations. Using the isomorphic paradigm, my thesis will explore performance-based customer service being implemented by financial organizations. Even if the process of banks adopting Disney's principles can be explained by isomorphism, the question remains to be answered whether it makes sense for an organization from a different field with seemingly different objectives to copy another. Though not a goal of my study, it is a question to keep in mind when attempting to understand the process as a whole.

CHAPTER III

"DISNEYIZATION"

Before describing the method and results of my study, it is first necessary to become more familiar with the ways in which the Disney Company presents its customer service guidelines, and why their method of customer interaction would be appealing to other companies seeking to create a positive experience for their customers and foster a relationship with them. Specific examples of companies whose leaders look to Disney as a guide, both within the financial industry and outside of it, will be presented in order to further demonstrate the phenomenon whereby companies outside of the entertainment industry seek to mimic Disney's customer service principles.

"Disneyization", not "Disneyfication"

Definitions

The term "disneyization" has been chosen to include in the title of my work because it best describes the process in question. Disneyization is defined by Bryman (2004) as "the process by which the principles of the Disney theme parks are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world"(1). Bryman distinguishes his term "disneyization" with the term "disneyfication" which "has come to be seen as a distinctive approach to literature and history that entails a crude simplification that also cleanses the object being Disneyfied of unpleasantness" (2004:14).

Negative Context of "Disneyfication"

Disney films. "Disneyfication", according to Bryman, is almost always used in a negative way. For example, the movie *Pocahontas* has been berated by critics for being shown from a colonialist point of view, which is "rooted in racism" and ignores much of the complexity of its legitimate cultural framework (2004:6). Most literature uses the term disneyfication to describe a sort of "purifying" effect. Another example of the use of "disneyfication" in a purifying context is discussed by Nel (2003) to show how Dr. Seuss's work writing children's books, meant to "encourage critical thinking" has been trivialized and simplified by filmmakers, looking for profit as the bottom line.

Disney theme parks. It is not just in reference to films that Disney has been criticized for the process of trivialization. Synnott (1995) suggests, in reference to Disney World's *Hall of Presidents* and *American Adventure*, and also its attempts to build an American history theme park, that Disney's treatment of United States history in its theme parks as in need of reevaluation. Going to an amusement park to have fun and experience a sort of fantasy world is not the proper environment to affiliate with historical events such as World War II, as Disney had planned (Synnott 1995:53). It would be a drastic simplification and trivialization of important world events that had real and permanent, lasting consequences.

Therefore, because of the context in which "disneyfication" is generally used, the term "disneyization" will be used instead in my study, because it is the most appropriate term to describe the process of banking institutions adopting the principles of Disney within their own organizations.

Aspects of Disneyization

McDonaldization and Disneyization

In *The Disneyization of Society* (2004), Alan Bryman expands on Ritzer's *McDonaldization of Society* (1993). McDonaldization refers to the process whereby society is adopting "fast food principles" in all areas of life (Ritzer 1993). These principles are efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. These are principles of rationality, and according to the McDonaldization theory, they have infiltrated and become a part of social life. In the same way, Bryman uses the term "disneyization" to describe the ways in which parts of society have adopted the principles of Disney's theme parks. In explaining how Disneyization expands on McDonaldization, Bryman stresses the importance of the customer's experience. With McDonaldization, a customer knows what to expect upon going to a fast food restaurant- he or she will be served quickly, and the food will be cheap and familiar. If a restaurant is "disneyized", however, it strives to provide an *experience* for the customer that is special and dramatic (Bryman 2004:5). The experience is created through the use of "performative labour".

Performative Labour

Bryman suggests that there are many parts of society that have borrowed concepts from Disney's theme parks. The four aspects of "disneyization" are theming, hybrid consumption, merchandising, and performative labour (2004:vii). Performative labour refers to the idea that work is considered to be a theatrical performance, and the workplace a stage (Bryman 2004). Employers and their employees treat specific job functions and the work environment as though it were a performance. For example, Disney employees, or "cast members", are expected to not only perform their regular job duties but pay attention to their posture, facial expressions, and use specific Disney language to put on a show for guests at the theme parks (Bryman 2004). Outside of Disney, in other companies and industries, this takes various forms but usually involves smiling at a customer, making eye contact, using a certain script, and so forth. The goal of acting is to make a positive impression on the customer, therefore ensuring that the customer is so impressed that he or she is likely to continue dealing with the company.

The Smile. An interesting aspect of performative labour relates to the smile. A smile from employee to customer is the epitome of emotional labor because it is meant to create a positive impression for the customer (Bryman 2004). Disney employees and, increasingly, employees at many other companies in many different industries, are required to smile as part of their job duties. In fact, Bryman cites a Disney training manual that requires employees to have an "honest smile", even if they are having a bad day, because they are paid for smiling (2004:108-109). A company's mandate that an employee *must* smile, but that the smile must also be *genuine* and *honest*, seems paradoxical.

Scripts. Another way Disney employees' behavior is controlled in order to create a certain experience for a guest is through the use of scripts. These are required words or phrases that an employee must use in his or her interaction with customers, or a certain type of language. The script can take the simpler form of "welcome to..." or "thank you for coming", or can be even more descriptive and elaborate. Some companies, however, are relaxing their "script" requirements, because they are having a counter-effect- customers sometimes view these rehearsed words as insincere. Instead of creating a positive impression, the use of scripts may have the opposite effect and deter customers (Bryman 2004). However, many companies still require theatrical behavior, such as mandatory smiling and the use of scripts, because they are attempting to make the customer as happy as possible.

Transferred Disneyization. The notion that work is a performance, and that the workplace is the stage and the employees are actors, is present in Disney but in many other organizations as well. "Transferred Disneyization" is coined by Bryman as the process by which "Disney theme park principles are learned and directly implemented into other spheres" (2004:13). Through a discussion of the emotional labor required by those working for airlines, retail stores, hotels, and zoos, Bryman shows how these other industries have adopted Disney's performance principles. However, there is very little mention of banking or other financial industries in Bryman's discussion, possibly because academic literature concerning emotional labor within the financial industry is scarce. However, it will be shown throughout my work that banks within the financial industry have also begun adopting Disney's principles and implementing them in their own ways.

The "Disney Way"

Organizational leaders in various industries have witnessed the success of the Disney Company and have tried to adapt the customer service practices of Disney to their own organizations. The adaptation has occurred officially, with Disney executives marketing its approach to organizations outside the entertainment field, through courses and books. The adaptation has also occurred "unofficially", with certain elements of Disney's approach appearing in practices of other organizations. Before providing examples of organizations adopting Disney's principles, it is necessary to outline the success of Disney and discuss some of its customer service principles.

Disney's Success

The Disney Company is a frequently cited "model" of customer service. It has even been named the best customer service provider in the world (Capodagli and Jackson 1999). Including revenue from its theme parks, movies, retail, and other sources, Disney makes approximately $27 billion a year (Shuit 2004:2). In addition to its financial success, approximately 70 percent of guests who visit Disney World are return members (Shuit 2004:3). Also, among Disney World employees the turnover rate is less than 20 percent, which is less than half the entertainment industry average (Shuit 2004:3). The success of Disney prompted other companies to look to them for guidance in developing customer service programs within their own organizations.

Walt Disney World is where Disney tests its customer service theories because there, its employees come into contact with the most customers, compared to other Disney Company locations (Shuit 2004). Disney calls its employees "cast members", and expects them not only to perform functional job duties, such as sweeping the streets, but also to put on a show for the guests and smile, be courteous, and conform to Disney's culture (Giroux 1999). The smiling, friendly cast member should elicit a response from the guests at Disney World and make them feel so happy and welcome that they want to return.

The Disney Institute

It is the creation of "magic" for its guests, as Disney calls it, that other companies desire to emulate within their own organizations, since it has been so successful. Disney began selling its customer service ways in the form of a training course to other businesses in 1986 (Moore 1997). The Disney Institute, located at Disney World in Florida, tailors its courses for different industries, including healthcare, the automotive industry, financial organizations, government organizations, and more (Our Clients 2007). These courses take the form of short presentations and workshops, or longer 1-3 day programs. The programs include *observation*, where attendees watch Disney practices behind the scenes, *implementation*, where they learn how to use Disney's approach in their own organization, and *applications*, which are workshop sessions (Custom Solutions 2007).

In a book published by the Disney Institute entitled Be Our Guest (2001), Disney outlines the idea that any business that serves customers is like Disney, because they all have the same goal, which is to serve customers. The Disney Institute wants companies to see their businesses as similar, even if there are in completely different industries with a different clientele. The underlying idea behind the comparison is that all companies need to be customer-focused so that they will stay in business and be successful. Therefore, the Disney Institute concludes that (with some adaptation of the other companies) the same kinds of principles they use to satisfy their guests can be used in other industries that are outside the entertainment world. It is my aim to show that these "performance principles" have become norms for customer service and are being internalized across many different fields, including the banking industry. The analogy of the theater used to indicate that a job is considered a performance is especially important in Disney's courses, and is commonly adopted by other organizations.

Theatrical Analogies

Onstage and offstage. Walt Disney World uses the language of theater to refer to its relationship with its "guests". One of Disney's four main principles of customer service, "show", is one of the many aspects emphasized in the Disney Institute's courses[1]. At Disney World, there are specific areas that are designated as "on stage" and "off stage". When cast members are out in the park doing their work, they are onstage, and must act as cast members putting on a show to create "magic" for the Guests. An underground network that runs below the park is the offstage area. By keeping the onstage and offstage areas separate, Disney strives to create the most pleasing "stage" for its Guests as is possible, and remove anything a Guest would perceive as negative, in order to maximize the positive experience a Guest has at the park.

Setting. Another important part of the "theatrical" analogy provided by Disney is *setting*. Setting is defined by the Disney Institute as "the environment in which service is delivered to customers, all of the objects within that environment, and the procedures used to enhance and maintain the service environment and objects" (2001:107). Components of setting can be overt, or less obvious. Examples include architectural design, lighting, texture of the floor, color, detail, music, and so forth. A very important component of setting is detail. Even a small negative detail, such as a dead plant, sends a message to the guest.

Language. The emphasis on the language used by the company and employees to describe their jobs is also intentional. The jobs are called "performances", uniforms are called "costumes", employees are called "cast members", and interviews are even called "auditions" (Disney Institute 2001:81). By using theater language to describe the company's relationship to its guests, Disney creates in both the worker and the customer a new reality which is intended to affect both how the worker performs his or her job, and how the customer experiences the park.

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[1] The three other main principles are safety, courtesy, and efficiency. All four standards "represent how the service theme is fulfilled and offer a set of filters that help Disney employees to judge and prioritize the actions that contribute to the guest experience" (Disney Institute 2001:59).

While it seems to make sense for an entertainment-based company such as Disney to use these "performance" principles, companies such as Bank of America have adopted principles such as these with their own employees and workplaces. Banking centers have specific "on- stage" areas and "off- stage" areas, according to top retail executive Liam McGee (Cline 2006:1). Institutions that adopt aspects of Disney's service paradigm pay close attention to the performance they put on for their customers in an effort to brighten the customer's experience and retain them. By expecting employees to perform and put on a show for the guests or customers, and by managing the setting, companies (no matter what industry they are) try to create a delightful experience that will exceed their expectations and make people want to come back.

<u>"Official" Adoption of the Disney Way</u>

There is ample evidence of the various types of companies and organizations that are following Disney's footsteps in their implementation of customer service expectations. Organizations that copy Disney's approach to customer service are part of a variety of organizational fields, including the healthcare, government, retail, and financial fields. Disney even gives awards, called "Mouscars", to companies that exemplify Disney's service standards.

The fact that Disney recognizes other companies that model their practices by giving awards to them may encourage mimetic isomorphism. Disney's approach is legitimized through its own courses and books. Then other organizations, witnessing Disney's self promotion and seeing it as valuable, adopt their practices. Disney congratulates them on copying their company, further legitimizing the process and bringing recognition. The recognition then can lead to more mimicking by other organizations.

Healthcare organizations. East Jefferson General Hospital, in Louisiana, received a "Mouscar" (an off-spin of the Oscar) from Disney for excellent service modeled on the Disney Way and was "the first to fully exemplify the guest relations philosophy of Walt Disney World" (Moore 1997:1). The hospital uses Disney's principles to make sure those who stay at the hospital experience the best service they can- from cleanliness to timely meals. Managers from East Jefferson hospital had attended the Disney Institute to learn about Disney's customer service and how to implement it within their own organization. The University of Chicago Hospitals and Health System is an example of another healthcare network that partnered with Disney and benefited from its redesigned service culture (Schueler 2000). Every year, the hospital network selects 20-25 "service heroes" to attend the Disney Institute.

Disney's ideas have become popular among healthcare institutions across the country. A former hospital executive, Fred Lee, even wrote a book entitled If Disney Ran Your Hospital. Lee's book was published in 2004 and describes how hospitals can use Disney's customer service principles to increase efficiency and become more competitive. One chapter, entitled "Change the Concept of Work from Service to Theater", outlines the process by which, when people go to a hospital, they tend to remember smaller experiences concerning how they were treated, and use those experiences to evaluate the total experience. These smaller experiences can be seen as "vignettes", and hospital workers must be taught how to act in addition to performing other job duties (Lauer 2004:2).

Other clients. Hospitals are not the only organizations that have adopted Disney's precepts. Various government, retail, and non-profit organizations, along with universities and financial organizations have all looked toward Disney as a model of customer service success. Specific clients of the Disney Institute include Amtrak, Chevrolet, Delta, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, McDonalds, Sears, Duke University, and the IRS (Our Clients 2007). In addition, numerous financial organizations are also clients: Bank One Corporation, Credit Union National Association, Merrill Lynch, Metlife, Nationsbank, Fidelity Investments, and more (Our Clients 2007). These companies pay a high price to attend the institute, as well: some packages run at approximately $3500 per person for a three-day program (Shuit 2004).

"Unofficial" Adoption of the Disney Way

In addition to those companies known to have attended Disney Institute or adopted some of its customer service principles, there is evidence within other organizations of a customer service emphasizing these principles, whether or not they are attributed to Disney. For instance, a Consumer Reports article on the banking industry observes that banks try to get customers "in the mood" to do more business with them by changing the way the branches look. They call their branches "stores" and put coffee bars inside, set up movies for customers to watch, or even hold yoga classes (2006:12).

Bank of America and customer "delight". Bank of America frequently uses the word "delight" to describe the desired response elicited from its customers. Known to have attended the Disney Institute, Bank of America's executive staff began developing a new way to conduct business in 2001, with a focus on customer satisfaction. Using what is known as a "Six Sigma" strategy, which had been more commonly found in the manufacturing industry, Bank of America created new customer satisfaction goals. They saw each interaction with a customer as an "opportunity to delight the customer" and recognized that delighted customers were significantly more likely to recommend Bank of America to others. Delighted customers were also much more likely to open new accounts than customers who were only "satisfied" (Cox and Bossert 2005:24). Since the implementation of these ideas, customer satisfaction at Bank of America has improved significantly.

Bank of America attributes one of the keys of its success to its "Bank of America Spirit" training program. The Spirit Program was modeled after Disney employee behavior, and included greeters at the front doors of the branches (Cox and Bossert 2005:25). In addition to these "greeters", some branches, as an experiment, put couches in the lobbies, set up coffee bars, and set up televisions to help customers pass time while waiting (Thomke 2003:74). These changes have now been implemented in branches across the country.

According to Consumer Reports, other top-rated banks took steps to improve the customer's experience of a visit to the bank as well. Wachovia Bank, for example, moved its tellers to concierge-style desks, and bank managers sit right by the front door. Commerce Bank, like Bank of America, now has greeters at the door (2006:14).

"WOW". "Wow" also seems to have become a catch phrase in the banking world. Commerce Bank is focused on its "WOW Culture", which is its attention to customer satisfaction which results in a pleasing environment (Bielski 2004:30). The vice president of Union Bank of California has said that "We train and encourage employees to really wow our customers by extending themselves in service situations" (Bielski 2004:29). The word "wow" implies more than just a good experience, it implies an exceptional, memorable experience that is out of the ordinary. In fact, the "wow factor" is featured in the book published by the Disney Institute: "Wowing guests...means not only meeting these preconceived notions of what a Disney vacation should be, but exceeding them" (2001:25).

These examples of companies that have adopted some of Disney's performance principles show that some financial companies, along with companies in other industries such as the medical industry, government, and more, have been coming up with new ways to relate to the customers of their organizations. Whether this process is directly attributed to Disney or not, it is fair to say that there appears to be a perception across various types of organizations, including banking, that it is a successful and legitimate way to conduct business.

Why focus on the customer? An emphasis on a company's relationship with the customer was not always as evident as it is today. Customer service has evolved into a main focus of many companies who recognize that content, or even "delighted" customers, as is the case with Bank of America, bring more business and profit. A poor service experience is the "biggest single cause of customer attrition", and controlling the experience that a customer has is essential to keeping customers (Bielski 2004:29). The financial services industry has been shown to have some of the lowest customer satisfaction ratings compared to other industries (Cox and Bossert 2005:23). Perhaps this is why banks and other financial companies look to Disney for guidance when designing new customer service strategies.

Though Disney's approach has been seen as widely successful, in fact, so much so that it has been adapted by other organizations, it is not without its critics. Giroux (1999) criticizes Disney's approach to both people-management and its attempt to eliminate reality by making its parks seem problem-free. The criticism extends even to the language used. For instance, an accident in the park is considered an "incident" (48). One of the paradoxes of Disney's parks is that though employees are required to be smiling and happy as part of their jobs, the park itself is "designed to erase problems associated with low-skill, low-paying, and routinized labor" (49). In other words, these workers are required to exhibit behaviors as part of a job function that disregard many their own personal situations in life. Though an investigation of the employee-employer relationship is not the focus of my study, it is wise to consider these types of possible implications in future studies of work and society.

Emotional Labor

One of the main criticisms of the experiential economy that the Disney organization has helped to create is its unfair expectations of employees (Giroux 1999). At Disney World, employees are given no room to express individuality. The way employees dress is controlled and the ways in which they communicate to guests is part of a mandatory script (Giroux 1999). It is fair to assume that any other organization that models its customer service principles on Disney's may also have potentially harmful and alienating consequences for its employees.

Though the main part of my study focuses on broader organizational occurrences, it is important to consider the consequences of emotion management for the individual workers. Emotional labor, discussed in the first chapter, refers to the process of managing one's feelings, and is expected of most customer service workers. When a worker must smile, use a company-mandated script, and suppress his or her true emotions in order to perform a job, that person uses emotional labor. He or she is paid to smile or to create an emotional experience for the customer. The process of suppressing one's feelings to create an experience is referred to by Hochschild as "surface acting" (2003:48). However, there is an increasingly common expectation of companies that require something intense, termed "deep acting" (Hochschild 2003:49). Though not termed by Disney as such, deep acting is what employees do when they are required to feel the way they are acting. When a Disney employee smiles at a guest, he or she is actually *required* to feel happy (Bryman 2004:108).

Deep Acting

Deep acting is different from surface acting in that it requires associates to *actually feel* the required emotion. Companies want associates' smiles to be genuine, instead of merely appearing genuine. For example, in study of Delta airline stewardesses, Hochschild notes that the company advertised that their associates' smiles are "genuine" and "not just painted on" (2003:4). Companies try to create enough motivation and enthusiasm that employees will actually feel happy and their smiles will be real. For example, Disney uses specific training programs that are intended to "secure commitment to the company and its values" because "such commitment is likely to facilitate emotional labor" (Bryman 2004:109).

Alienation. A discussion of whether the requirement of "deep acting" is positive or negative is not the aim of my study. Because most of the sociological research done on customer service centers around the "emotional labor" concept, however, it is worth noting that Hochschild does see deep acting as a negative process which alienates workers from themselves and their work. It "estranges workers from their own smiles and convinces customers that on-the-job behavior is calculated" (2003:5).

Similar to the way in which Marx described how workers could become alienated from themselves and their work, Hochschild describes how those who perform emotional labor can become alienated from their own emotions (2003:17). Because a person's emotional self is able to be marketed and controlled, it takes something private away from the worker and affects the worker's ability to feel in other areas of his or her life (Hochschild 2003:21). A person's emotions can be bought and sold, and acting is no longer just in the entertainment industry, or something that is done when relating to other individuals.

Studies of Emotional Labor in Service Jobs

Prior research has looked at the consequences of emotional labor in different fields of work. Though my study does not aim to investigate the nature of emotional labor and its consequences on *individuals*, it is important to note that its requirement does affect the individual in many ways, some of which are not currently understood. In a society where so many workers are performing emotional of labor, it is essential to understand its effects. In addition, most of the studies on customer service center on the use of "emotional labor" within a specific setting, and not an entire field of work, such as the banking industry. The following studies demonstrate particular ways in which emotional labor manifests itself in different organizational settings.

Though banking and customer service industry journals abound with information on the financial industry and customer service, relatively little attention has been given to customer service in financial industries within the academic literature. In addition, the information in banking magazines is largely anecdotal, or is focused on banks' financial success and describes trends. Empirical studies of customer service work do exist, however most are studies within industries other than the financial industry (e.g. Martin et al. 1998; Zammuner and Galli 2005; Rafaeli 1989).

<u>Studies outside the financial industry.</u> Through both observation and interviews, Martin et al. (1998) were able to investigate the role of emotion work of retail workers at The Body Shop. They found that workers at the Body Shop were required by their managers to seem happy and cheerful, even if they did not feel happy (p. 461). Sometimes, these emotion management behaviors have been found to have a negative impact on the employee. For instance, through survey data regarding the regulation of workers' emotions in different job sectors (a hospital, a bank, a post office, and a retail store), Zammuner and Galli (2005) found that emotional labor can affect workers psychologically by causing burnout and "depersonalization" (p. 355).

Other studies comment on the conflicting expectations many service workers contend with. Oftentimes, service employees must either serve "two bosses", the management and the customer, or have conflicting job duties. One such study, concerning the relationship between supermarket cashiers and their customers, was conducted in 1986 in Jerusalem (Rafaeli 1989). Results from participant observation and interviews with both cashiers and customers indicated that these conflicting relationships create strain on the cashiers. One of the ways this occurs is because there is a disconnection between what management expects of the cashier and what the customer expects of them. On one hand, there is the transactional nature of the job where detail must be paid attention to, and on the other, management requires that the cashier must be customer- oriented.

Financial industry service studies. In addition to the previous studies, other studies within the financial industry also have identified conflicting expectations. In a study of both workers at a fast food restaurant and insurance salespeople, Leidner (1991) discusses the "hilarious detail" of the insurance workers' training, which involved instructions of how to stand, make eye contact, and when to joke with potential customers. During training, they also practiced scripts and role-played. In addition, significant emphasis was placed on thinking positively and being enthusiastic. Leidner notes the paradox in the training: "you should do everything exactly the way we tell you to, but success depends upon the strength of your character" (162).

In a study of a Norwegian banking center, Forseth (2005) outlines the contradicting expectations the management had of the tellers of that bank. Service providers had to smile, and be empathetic and "nicer than natural", while also being firm with customers, and efficient at the same time as being caring. In addition, though Forseth's study focuses mainly on the implications of a bank teller's job relating to gender, a description given by a bank manager of the change in the focus of banking is worth noting: the manager described how the task of banks used to be mainly focused on the financial aspects of the job, with "low customer orientation" and how now, the strategy of the bank has become twofold- to focus on both transactions and the customers (446). This description is an example of the emphasis being investigated in my study- if there is a higher level of “customer orientation” as of late, either in place of or in addition to a “transactional” emphasis, this will align with the manager’s description of his own bank.

The aforementioned studies all investigate the nature of emotional labor within a specific setting. None demonstrates, as my study seeks to do, an empirical change in the nature of customer service over time. My research looks at a specific occupation, that of the bank teller, and instead of investigating the nature of emotional labor within that occupation, uses primary sources (employment ads) to indicate a trend in the banking industry toward a more “disneyized” approach to customer service on a broader level. Additionally, a similar investigation of banking advertisements aimed at attracting customers adds further credibility to the results of my study

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

Hypothesis

The research question investigated in my study is: "Has there been a change in the nature of customer service within financial institutions over the past thirty years, and if so, what is the nature of the change?" I hypothesize that there has been a shift in emphasis from transaction-based service to customer-based service, meaning that financial institutions previously viewed accuracy and efficiency as the most valuable way to provide their services, but now are focusing more on quality service and customer relationships as a way to attract and keep customers. My three hypotheses are as follows:

1. There has been a change in the nature of customer service within financial institutions over the past thirty years.
2. The change in the nature of customer service involves an increasing emphasis on service over other aspects of the job duties.
3. The emphasis on service manifests itself in required behaviors (e.g. personal attention) meant to create a memorable experience for a customer.

Sample and Data Collection

The above research question was investigated using two separate content analyses of 1) employment ads and 2) bank ads from a popular newspaper. These advertisements are from the *New York Times*, and span thirty years (from 1975-2005). Ads were collected from both *The New York Times Digital Archive*, for the years 1975, 1985, and 1995, and from microfilm copies of the 2005 issues. The total number of advertisements collected from both analyses is 659.

Bank teller analysis. First, "help wanted" classified advertisements from the New York Times for bank tellers were examined using key words published in the ads. These employment ads were collected in order to determine, based upon word usage, what has changed in financial companies' expectations about both the kind of person banks are looking to hire and also about what aspects most define the job (is the job mainly seen in terms of its transactional functions, or its service provision?). There were a total of 327 advertisements collected for the teller ad analysis, from the years 1975, 1985, 1995, and 2005.

Bank advertisement analysis. Secondly, advertisements from the New York Times designed to attract customers to banks were collected. Similar to the teller ads, these bank ads were collected in order to determine whether there has been an increased emphasis on building a relationship with customers, over efficiency and the advertisement of more concrete aspects of banking, such as bank products or free gifts. There were a total of 332 advertisements collected for the second analysis of employment ads, also from the year 1975, 1985, 1995, and 2005.

Teller Advertisements

Preliminary analysis. The sample for the study of bank teller employment ads consists of 327 employment advertisements for bank tellers. After a preliminary analysis of these ads, key words or phrases were chosen in an effort to best capture change in the nature of customer service. In performing this preliminary analysis, I compared ten advertisements from 1975 with ten advertisements from 2005, to see what differences existed. I then looked at five ads each from 1985 and 1995. Additionally, because several works consulted for my study emphasized “smiling” as a desirable customer service trait (e.g. Bryman 2004; Hochschild 2003; Disney Institute 2001) the word “smile” was added. Based upon the differences found in the preliminary analysis, the following words/phrases were chosen for the subsequent content analysis:

Salary/benefits

Advancement Opportunity

Working Environment

Experience

Clerical experience

Detail

Typing Skills

Math skills/figure aptitude

Efficiency

Accuracy

Smile

Enthusiasm

Friendly/personable

Customer service skills

Courtesy

People-skills/interpersonal skills

Communication skills

The first three words/phrases relate to the company's attractiveness for a potential employee, and the next thirteen were chosen to capture the characteristics employers were most likely to seek in a bank teller.

The bank teller position was chosen for my content analysis because it is a job which most people can easily identify with and also has existed for the entire span of the years in my research. Thus, any change in the advertisement for a candidate to fill the bank teller position will lend more credibility to results by being more indicative of change, and is less likely to be a result of something other than the nature of the job itself.

Data collection. For the years of 1975, 1985, 1995, and 2005, classified ads for Sundays within every month of the year were collected. Specifically, in 1975 (n = 94), every advertisement for a bank teller from the first Sunday of every month was collected. In 1985 (n = 121), ads from the second Sunday of every month were collected. In 1995 (n = 59) and 2005 (n = 53), teller ads from every Sunday of every month were collected. These differences in the Sunday papers chosen to collect ads from resulted out of a necessity to collect a sufficient amount of advertisements from each year.

Originally, the research plan for my study entailed collecting only teller ads from the first Sunday of each month. Though this would have been more consistent, a problem arose upon the beginning of the data collection, in that there was a lack of advertisements for certain years. The year 1975 yielded 94 advertisements, but all three subsequent years' totals were much lower. Because of this, it was necessary to collect more advertisements from additional Sundays to obtain the highest number of ads possible from the years that were lacking.

Bank Advertisements

Preliminary analysis. As with the teller ads, a preliminary investigation of ads from 1975 and 2005 was used in the decision about which words and phrases to include. The resulting words and phrases used in the analysis include:

Free gift

Interest rates

Convenient

Efficient

Save money

Ease/easy

Reputation

Advice

Customer service

Trust

Personal attention

Working together

The first seven words/phrases relate to attractive features of the bank itself. The following five words were chosen to show an emphasis on relationship-building by the banks, and advertising not just features of the bank, but ways that the customer would have a pleasant *experience* with that bank. The sample for the bank advertisements consists of 332 ads.

Data collection. The final sample size for banking advertisements for each year is as follows: 1975 (n = 66), 1985 (n = 90), 1995 (n = 95), 2005 (n = 81). For the years of 1975, 1985, 1995, and 2005, I collected advertisements from every *New York Times* issue for the first Sunday of every month. I thoroughly scanned every page of every newspaper chosen (a total of 48 newspapers) to look for the advertisements. Each newspaper was several hundred pages long. Every advertisement for a bank was collected and analyzed. This includes various types of banks- commercial, savings, investment banks, and credit unions. All types were included because all serve customers, whether this interaction takes place face-to-face or remotely on the phone.

Analysis

For the teller ads, every ad for a "teller" or "bank teller" from the employment section of *The New York Times* (on each specific date) was included in the analysis. For the bank ads, every advertisement aiming to attract customers to a bank (whether for deposit banking, a loan, or investments) was collected and included. The advertisements, once collected, were numbered and entered into an Excel spreadsheet (separate spreadsheets for the teller ads and the bank ads) along with the date and year. Then, each ad was analyzed according to its inclusion of the words or phrases listed above. If the ad included at particular word or phrase, a "1" was recorded, and if not, a "0" was recorded.

When the ads and counts of specific wording within the job advertisements were all recorded in the Excel spreadsheets, the results were transferred to Stata for ease of comparison by year. Each word/phrase was listed as one variable, as well as the year in which an ad appeared.

Teller Advertisements

Each use of a particular word or phrase indicates a priority given to that skill or feature by the company- for example, "math skills" will be considered transactional, and "smile" will be considered an indicator of service-orientedness. These phrases have been chosen because they indicate a particular emphasis on either "transaction" or on "service".

Transaction terms. For instance, when a customer enters a bank and hands a check to a teller to cash, the actual operations the teller performs to cash the check are transactional. These job duties require an attention to the detail of the check, the use of a computing system to process the transaction, and a basic knowledge of math for counting out correct amount of money. In the list of terms I have chosen, the terms that will be considered to reflect the transactional nature of a bank teller's job are: detail, typing skills, math skills, efficiency, and accuracy.

Service terms. In contrast, the "service" element of the job will be indicated by the terms smile, enthusiasm, friendly, customer service skills, courtesy, people-skills, and communication skills. These terms reflect characteristics of skills that are desirable in the cultivation of an actual relationship between the bank teller and the customer. Cashing the check requires transaction skills, and relating to the customer requires interpersonal skills, reflected in the "service" terms. Therefore, an emphasis on the transaction-based words by an advertisement will reflect more concern with hiring someone capable of those aspects of the job, and an emphasis on the "service" terms will reflect more concern about those aspects.

Workplace terms. In addition, the three phrases "salary/benefits", "advancement opportunity", and "working environment" were included in my analysis in an attempt to capture a possible change over time in emphasis from attracting employees to a company (based on the attributes of the company/job) to attracting a certain *type* of person (based on the attributes of the potential employee) to that company.

Bank Advertisements

Similar to the teller ads, words were chosen to reflect either a more "transactional" orientation, or a "service" orientation, with a slightly different context. In the bank ads, the words and phrases chosen to analyze indicate either features of the bank, or relationship- building with the bank.

Bank features. The first seven terms previously listed under "data collection" for banking advertisements (free gift, interest rates, convenient, efficient, save money, ease, and reputation) will be considered to reflect the "bank feature" aspect of advertising. These terms indicate a bank's emphasis on components of banking itself, such as accounts and loans. For instance, a bank's offer of a free gift to a customer for opening an account will be considered to reflect a desire on the bank's part to draw customers in using practical and concrete methods. Similarly, advertising ease, efficiency and convenience, and focusing on the bank's long-standing reputation also demonstrate a desire to attract customers based upon specific features of the bank itself, instead of focusing on the *experience* the customer will have.

Relationship-building. In contrast, the other five selected terms (advice, customer service, trust, personal attention, and working together) will indicate a focus on the desire of a bank to attract customers to an advertised positive *experience* of that bank. These terms will be considered to reflect a bank's effort to create a "relationship" of sorts between the customer and the bank. A mention of "customer service" within a particular ad indicates that a bank wants potential customers to know that they will be "served" by that bank. The advertisement of "advice-giving" indicates a relationship between customer and bank by assuming that customers will look toward bank personnel as knowledgeable people who can guide them in their banking choices. "Trust", an important term used in describing good relationships of all kinds, implies that the bank can be counted on by a customer. "Personal attention" indicates that the customer will be the focus and that the customer will have an individualized experience, and "working together" is an indicator of a relationship where bank and customer are partners and implies a sort of equality.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

The main purpose of my investigation is to show that, over the past thirty years, banks have been increasingly emphasizing the customer service role of their employees. I also aim to show that banks have become more concerned with building a "relationship" with their customers, rather than simply attracting them to the bank by offering incentives (e.g. free gifts or low interest rates).

The following tables show each word or phrase discussed in the previous section and the percentage of advertisements from each year that included that term. For most of the terms, the actual term itself had to be represented in the ad in order to be counted. (For example, an advertisement would have to include the word "efficiency", and not just imply a desire for this trait, to be counted). However, salary/benefits, math skills, free gift, and interest rate were treated differently. For the term "salary/benefits", any ad that included a salary figure, offered an "attractive salary", or mentioned the word "benefits", was included. "Math skills" also included the terms "add and subtract" and "figures". A bank advertisement was counted for "free gift" if there was a tangible object offered- for example, a toaster, or a football. Finally, if a bank ad either included the words "interest rate" or an actual interest rate (for example, 3.5%), the ad was counted under this category.

The first three tables are the results of the teller advertisement analysis. These words and phrases have been divided into three categories- those that are primarily the employer looking to attract someone to the company, those terms that are “transactional”, and those terms that are “service” centered. The last two tables present the results of the banking advertisement analysis and are grouped into a “banking features” focus and a “relationship” focus.

Teller Advertisements

Table 1. Percentages of Teller Workplace Terms by Year

	1975 (n = 94)	1985 (n = 121)	1995 (n = 59)	2005 (n = 53)
Salary/benefits	90%	73%	59%	62%
Advancement opportunity	16%	26%	8%	4%
Working environment	22%	26%	7%	6%

Table 2. Percentages of Teller Transactional Terms by Year

	1975 (n = 94)	1985 (n = 121)	1995 (n = 59)	2005 (n = 53)
Experience	82%	83%	88%	77%
Clerical experience	12%	10%	0%	0%
Detail	0%	1%	0%	2%
Typing Skills	2%	6%	10%	0%
Math skills	7%	31%	8%	2%
Efficiency	0%	1%	0%	0%
Accuracy	0%	0%	2%	2%

Table 3. Percentages of Teller Service Terms by Year

	1975 (n = 94)	1985 (n = 121)	1995 (n = 59)	2005 (n = 53)
Smile	0%	0%	2%	2%
Enthusiasm	0%	0%	2%	0%
Friendly/personable	0%	10%	3%	4%
Customer service skills	0%	19%	24%	51%
Courtesy	0%	1%	0%	6%
People-skills/interpersonal	3%	18%	16%	8%
Communication skills	0%	17%	15%	2%

Workplace terms. In the years 1975-85, there appears to be more emphasis on workplace characteristics, and less in 1995-2005 (Table 1). Bank hiring managers looking to attract employees by mentioning the salary and benefits, opportunity for advancement, or a pleasant working environment are fewer in more recent years. A full 90% of the ads from 1975 mentioned salary or benefits, compared to 62% of the 2005 ads. Ads mentioning advancement opportunity and a good working environment also decreased by approximately 10-15% between 1975 and 2005.

Transactional terms. Only one of the "transactional" terms changes significantly over time by becoming less featured, but other trends are a bit more confusing. "Clerical experience" was featured in 12% of the 1975 ads and 10% of the 1985 ads, but none of the 1995 or 2005 ads. The decrease in "clerical experience" was the only "transactional" result that turned out as hypothesized- a decrease in clerical experience indicates less emphasis on a "transactional" aspect of the teller position. The other results from Table 2 were not expected, and did not show as clear of a decrease in use from 1975 to 2005.

Some of the terms were featured in the teller ads increasingly from 1975 to 1995, but then actually decreased by 2005. For instance, a demand for typing skills actually increased from 2% in 1975, to 6% in 1985 and 10% in 1995, but then went back to zero in 2005. This pattern could be explained by the prevalence of computer use today, and therefore there would be less of a need to advertise typing skills, which many people already have today. Math skills were featured in 7% of the 1975 advertisements, but then the number jumped up to 31% in 1985 and dropped off after that. "Detail", "efficiency", and "accuracy" were all only minimally featured in any of the advertisements.

Service terms. An examination of the results of Table 3 shows similar results in that many of the terms did not appear frequently at all. "Smile" and "enthusiasm" both appeared minimally in 1995, but nowhere else. However, there appears to be a change between 1975 and 1985 in that many of the other terms began appearing in 1985. For example, both "friendly" and "communication skills" did not appear in any of the 1975 ads, but in 1985 appeared in 10% and 17%, respectively. The interesting trend with these two terms, however, is that after 1985, the appearance of these terms actually decreased. A similar trend is found with "people skills".

For the term "customer service skills", however, there is a clear and significant increase in the use of this term in teller employment ads from 1975 to 2005. In 1975, none of the ads mentioned this phrase. In 1985, 19% mentioned customer service skills, and in 1995, 24% of the teller ads did. By 2005, 51% of the ads used this phrase in the desired skills listed for a bank teller. The jump from none to half over the course of thirty years suggests an increasing emphasis on customer service by these companies, as was hypothesized.

Banking Advertisements

Table 4. Percentages of "Banking Features" Terms by Year

	1975 (n = 66)	1985 (n = 90)	1995 (n = 95)	2005 (n = 81)
Free gift	12%	12%	2%	5%
Interest rates	58%	66%	65%	31%
Convenient	9%	28%	7%	10%
Efficient	5%	9%	3%	2%
Save Money	8%	11%	12%	0%
Ease/easy	5%	7%	8%	7%
Reputation	20%	16%	12%	25%

Table 5. Percentages of Banking "Relationship" Terms by Year

	1975 (n = 66)	1985 (n = 90)	1995 (n = 95)	2005 (n = 81)
Customer service	5%	14%	23%	19%
Advice	8%	7%	16%	35%
Trust	0%	0%	2%	1%
Personal Attention	11%	19%	19%	40%
Working together	5%	7%	16%	25%

Banking features. The results shown in Table 4, above, indicate that there has been a decrease in the advertisement of some attractive qualities of banking services. For instance, banks used to advertise a free gift offer more frequently than today. In both 1975 and 1985, 12% of bank advertisements included a free gift offer as a way of attracting customers to the bank, but by 2005, only 5% included this type of offer. These free gifts generally took the form of a gift for opening an account, and some examples include t-shirts, toasters, radios, footballs, and other such items as incentives. Additionally, the promise of “saving money” by banking with a particular company decreased in its frequency of appearance in the banking ads by 2005. “Saving money” was a promise made by 8% of the 1975 ads, 11% of the 1985 ads, and 12% of the 1995 ads, but in 2005 it was featured in none of the ads.

Another popular way of attracting customers to banks, and one that still is fairly prevalent, is the advertisement of interest rates. These rates generally take either the form of low loan rates or high savings rates. Though still a common element in bank advertising, there was a decrease in the inclusion of an attractive interest rate by 2005. In 1975, 58% of ads included rates as part of their advertising (remaining steady at 66 and 65 percent for 1985 and 1995), compared to 31% in 2005.

Convenience, efficiency, and ease are all similar terms, but their prevalence within the ads was not consistent over time. “Convenience” appeared in 28% of 1985’s ads, up from 9% in 1975, however, this decreased again to 7% and 10% in 1995 and 2005. “Efficient” never rose above 10%, but was also highest in 1985, at 9%. A mere 2% of 2005’s ads advertised efficiency as an attractive banking feature. Advertising ease of use was not very common in any of the years, and remained from 5-8% at all four points in time.

The word “reputation” yielded different results than expected- 20% of the ads in 1975 used the term, and this number decreased to 16% in 1985 and 12% in 1995, then increased again to its highest- 25%- in 2005. Instead of continuing to decrease in importance, it appears that by 2005 banks began to advertise their reputation once again as a reason to bank with their particular institution.

<u>Relationship terms.</u> The prevalence of several of the “relationship” terms increased over time, as was expected. Advice, personal attention, and working together

were featured increasingly from 1975-2005, which indicates an increased desire of a bank to advertise the way in which a customer will be *treated* by that bank. The offer of "advice" by the bank's employees appeared in only 8% of the ads from 1975, and 35% of the ads in 2005 included the term. Similarly, "working together", implying a relationship between customer and bank, was featured in only 5% of ads in 1975 and 7% of ads in 1985, and then rose steadily to 25% in 2005. The most striking change over time, however, is shown by the prevalence of the term "personal attention"- beginning with 11% in 1975, rising to 19% in both 1985 and 1995, and then climbing to 40% of the ads in 2005. The emphasis on the personal attention a customer will receive in his or her interactions with the bank and its employees has clearly and significantly increased from 1975 to 2005.

Other terms were not included in the bank advertisements as frequently as expected in the most recent years. The term "trust" was barely featured in any of the ads. "Customer service" was featured in only 5% of the 1975 ads, and in 14% of the 1985 ads. In 1995, "customer service" was included in 23%, however in 2005 19% of the ads featured an advertisement of good customer service. Though the inclusion of "customer service" decreased slightly, it is possible that, because "good service" could encompass a myriad of different aspects, banks chose to focus on more specific *ways* a customer would be served- for example, advice, working together, and personal attention are all part of what is considered good customer service.

Overall, then, an analysis of banking advertisements has shown that from the years 1975-2005, there was a decrease in the advertisement of several features of banks, namely free gifts, interest rates, and the promise of "saving money". These features decrease in importance over time, as measured by their prevalence in bank advertisements. At the same time, an emphasis on several "relationship" terms (advice, personal attention, and working together) featured within the ads shows that banks have increasingly focused on the *experience* a customer will have with the bank, instead of primarily what monetary or tangible benefits they will receive.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

Teller Advertisements

Expected Results

Overall, many of the terms chosen for my analysis did not appear as frequently in the teller advertisements as was expected. In some cases, however, results from 1975 were significantly different from those in 2005. "Customer service skills" was a term that was used increasingly over time in the teller employment ads, indicating an increasing desire for a company to hire based upon those skills. Additionally, clerical experience was more important in 1975 and 1985, and not important at all in 1995 or 2005. The decrease in the number of ads including "clerical experience" shows a decreasing emphasis on "clerical" job duties (considered in my study to be "transactional" in nature), as was expected.

The decrease in appearance of the workplace terms (salary/benefits, advancement opportunity, and working environment) over time may suggest that companies are now not only focusing on attracting employees, but on attracting the *right* employees. The decrease could also be a function of the job market- for instance, it is possible that there was a greater need for tellers in 1975 and 1985 than there were in later years, where it would be less essential for a bank to make their working environment attractive to potential employees. The results of my content analysis, however, are not sufficient enough to determine this, and would need to be investigated further.

Unexpected Results

Closing of bank branches. Many of the other terms chosen hardly appeared in any of the advertisements. For example, detail, efficiency, accuracy, smile, and enthusiasm appeared only minimally. This is possibly a result of the actual words that were chosen, but there is also a possibility that the lack of these terms is a result of something larger.

One possibility is that, between 1985 and 1995, there was less of a necessity overall for bank tellers due to the increasing prevalence of the ATM. The difficulty in finding a large number of advertisements in 1995 also lends credibility to the explanation of a decreasing need for bank tellers. In addition, it has been shown that in the mid-1990s, many banks closed branches because they wanted to, in a sense, force customers to use ATMS because it was more cost-effective (Consumer Reports 2006:12). However, once research showed that many people still had reasons to visit a branch (though less often) banks began to focus more on customer service (Consumer Reports 2006:12).

The closing of branches could explain some other trends as well. In several instances, the prevalence of certain words or phrases increased between 1975 and 1985, and then decreased in 1995 and 2005 (for example, "friendly" and people skills"). The closing of banking branches (and thus, less hiring of tellers) could account for this trend and for the fewer number of advertisements for 1995 and 2005 overall. It is possible that the decrease may not reflect a decrease in banks' desire for these qualities, but rather trends within the banking industry itself.

Internet advertising. An even more significant development, online advertising, could also play a big part in the unexpected results of my study. It has been documented that the prevalence of online employment advertising has significantly decreased print newspapers' revenue, because so many companies advertise on the internet through Monster.com, Careerbuilder.com, and other such internet employment sites (Morton 2004:108).

In addition to competing employment sites on the internet, most newspapers also offer internet employment ads on their websites. On the *New York Times* "job market" section, an employer can pay $360 for 30 days of online advertising, and unlimited lineage (Employer Central 2007). Companies can put more information in internet ads than they would in a printed newspaper, where most charge by the size of the ad. The *New York Times* job market site also offers options such as "spotlight result" which ensures that a company's ad appears at the top of a search page, and "employer of the day" where a company can pay for this title for a day and will be featured on the home page of the *New York Times* website as well as the employment section.

These features allow for many more options for an employer than the printed word. Therefore, it is certainly possible that the lack of advertisements for bank tellers in the *Times* in 1995 and 2005 (and the subsequent lack of some of the terms investigated) could be partially due to the prevalence of online advertising. Because online advertising is so common, I attempted to do an additional investigation of archived internet advertisements, but I was not granted access for my study by the *New York Times*. As for publicly available information, on the *New York Times* website employment advertisements only go back for two months, and so anything prior to that is inaccessible.

<u>Supplementary Internet Investigation</u>

To obtain an additional source of information, I searched the *New York Times* website for bank teller advertisements, to see if the internet ads were different than those in the printed form of the paper. By searching for "teller" in the New York area, employment ads for three different banks were obtained. These ads spanned the months of February 2007 and April 2007. I took these three ads and searched for all of the terms used in my study.

<u>Results.</u> The results of my small investigation are very interesting. The first ad was for a bank teller for Bank of America. Most of the "service" terms were represented: smile, enthusiasm, friendly, courtesy, and customer service were all mentioned. In addition, the phrases "delight", "Bank of America Spirit", and "customer confidence and trust" were listed, as well as a requirement that a bank teller 'address each customer by name" (Bank of America 2007). Bank of America is a known client of the Disney Institute (Cox and Bossert 2005:25), so it is possible that some of this focus is a product of their affiliation. Also, it is important to note that in addition to these "service" terms, some of the transactional terms were represented as well: accuracy and efficiency were mentioned, as well as a requirement for "cash handling" experience.

An advertisement by Commerce Bank for a teller yielded similar results. Though it asked for candidates with cash handling and computer experience, it also asked for tellers who could "deliver legendary WOW! Customer Service" (Commerce Bancorp 2007). A teller advertisement by Adecco mentioned both good math skills and customer service experience (but was a much shorter ad).

It seems, from these three ads, that these companies are placing emphasis on both transaction *and* service components of a job. It is also possible that the presence or absence of the terms investigated in my study is proportional to the length of the ad itself. In a longer ad, companies have more options and more room to specify additional desired qualities in a job candidate, and tell more about the company itself. However, it is clear that these companies are emphasizing customer service as a very important aspect of a teller job, even to the point of using terms such as “spirit”, “delight”, and “wow”.

Though the three ads in my supplementary investigation were not investigated systematically as were the previous advertisements from 1975-2005, the results are important in that they show that online, there is a difference in length and content of the ads. Because of this, the results of my study that show very few terms such as “smile” and “enthusiasm” present in the printed ads may be due to the prevalence of online advertising. That “smile” and “enthusiasm” were terms present in the online ads, though not featured in the print ads, can be used as a possible explanation for the scarce amount of the terms discovered in the printed advertisements. Therefore, the lack of these terms in the printed ads does not necessarily mean that the trend toward advertising “customer service” terms does not exist, but rather it is possible that an examination of internet ads, since they are so prevalent, would better support my hypothesis. Additionally, perhaps an analysis of different primary sources (e.g. training materials) would yield different results than job advertisements. Other methods of investigation, such as interviews or surveys, could be used in further studies not as constrained by time, financial, and access concerns.

Bank Advertisements

Overall, in the analysis of the banking advertisements, it was shown that several aspects of advertisements formerly common- free gifts, a promise of saving money, and the advertisement of interest rates- decreased in their prevalence. These aspects are considered features of the bank, as opposed to an emphasis on a relationship with the customer. This indicates a decreasing emphasis on the advertisement of certain features of the bank and more concrete reasons for becoming a customer.

An even more striking result, however, was that the use of three of the "relationship" terms- advice, personal attention, and working together- increased significantly from 1975 to 2005. The advertisement of these relationship qualities reflects a desire on the bank's part to attract customers to a *relationship* with the bank, by promising a positive experience involving those elements. Banks want prospective customers to know that they will be dedicated to giving advice to them, and that the advice will entail personal attention. The "advice" and level of personal attention advertised indicates that banks want a customer to feel special, and as part of a relationship. As further emphasis, "working together" was a phrase that was featured in only 5% of the ads from 1975, but this increased to 25% by 2005. That a quarter of all banking advertisements stressed working together as a relationship indicator is an important development that indicates the changing nature of customer service and the relationship between customer and company.

These results, both from the banking advertisements and from the teller advertisements, tie into Gutek's idea of "pseudorelationships", discussed in the first chapter. She uses the term "pseudorelationship" to describe the processes by which a company attempts to form a relationship with customers (1999:607). It seems, from the results of the banking advertisement analysis, that this is exactly what is occurring with current banking advertisements, as compared to older ones. Before, banks focused more on finding concrete ways to attract customers- offering free gifts as an enticement, for example. Now, however, banks have focused on personal attention and a working relationship with customers, indicating that they assume these are the types of things that will attract more customers.

Summary of Results

Teller Advertisement Analysis

My results indicate that there indeed has been a change in the nature of customer service within financial institutions over the past thirty years. My results demonstrate the hypothesized changes in several ways. The first is that the results of the teller advertisements show a clear and significant increase in the desire for tellers who are dedicated to “customer service”. Additionally, a decreasing emphasis on “clerical” job duties was shown. These two trends both support my first and second hypotheses, that there has been a change in the nature of service and that the change takes the form of emphasis on service over other aspects of the job duties. Though some of the other terms investigated in the teller advertisement analysis did not appear as expected, this may be due to larger industry- wide or societal influences, as discussed- for example, the development of online advertising. As was shown, many of the terms not reflected in the print newspaper ads appeared in advertisements online,

Banking Advertisement Analysis

Additional support for these two hypotheses (that there has been a change and that the change emphasizes service) is shown by the results of the banking advertisement analysis. The terms “advice”, “personal attention”, and “working together” all significantly increased in their appearance from 1975 to 2005. This indicates that not only the nature of service has changed (since at the same time, the prevalence of free gift offers and the advertisement of special offers declined), but also that the change involves emphasis on service. All three of these terms reflect specific ways of serving customers. Additionally, my third hypothesis, that the emphasis on service manifests itself in behaviors meant to create a memorable experience for the customer, was also supported by the increase in these three terms. Giving advice, personal attention, and working together are all specific behaviors that focus on a customer's experience and relationship with the bank, rather than more concrete offers which do not.

These results, when combined with the examples discussed of different banks (such as Bank of America) changing their customer service approach to mirror Disney's, reflect a more relationship-oriented approach to customer service. Not only is a customer served, but also engaged in the process of entertainment. In this way, companies elicit a feeling from customers that is used to bring business. The focus on entertaining customers has arisen possibly because banking organizations have seen Disney and other organizations that have modeled Disney as using better and more successful customer service approaches than their own. As a result, in accordance with the mimetic isomorphism theory, they have changed their focus to an "experience" based approach, where the customer is not merely a passive recipient of a service, but part of an engaging and rewarding performance that will keep them not only satisfied, but "delighted" enough to return. In 1975, a customer may have received a toaster for opening a bank account, but now, he or she will be treated with "personalized attention" as a guest. Instead of a teller whose job is primarily to perform a deposit, a customer will encounter a teller who can not only do process a transaction but can also serve with a smile.

An important question that cannot be answered by the results of my study is whether these changes have resulted from the process of isomorphism, or from the demands of the customer. It is possible that one does not come before the other, but rather that they work in tandem, as is the case with most social phenomena. As more organizations model their service after Disney, the process has become a norm not only in the banking world but across fields, and this may even affect what customers *think* they want. Though not a focus of my study, it is an interesting question that further research could address in a further attempt to understand the phenomenon of Disneyization.

Implications

Although not all of the results of my study supported the hypothesis, my study is valuable nonetheless in that there are few studies that have been conducted to investigate customer service, and none, to my knowledge, which have examined job advertisements of bank advertisements within this context. Thus, the results of my study contribute to a scarce body of literature on the nature of customer service within financial institutions. My study is primarily exploratory in nature, in an effort to understand more fully the particulars of customer service relationships in the financial industry. This is important to the field of organizational sociology and to sociology as a whole.

The results are not meant to be generalized to all financial institutions, and it is possible that the observed results are specific only to the job of bank teller and only among those banks which advertise in the *New York Times*. Additionally, within the scope of my study there is no way to measure possible changes that may have occurred in the job market itself or in methods of advertising that could result in the way job advertisements are presented, though some information has been presented about these possibilities.

Though my thesis is concerned primarily with discussing these changes in a macro-level context, it is important to recognize that a person's work life is intricately bound to other aspects of his or her life, and changes in the structure of work affects people in many ways. Thus, changes on a large scale in the financial industry potentially affect anyone who is not only a worker of these organizations, but also anyone who is a customer of a bank, or any other financial service or institution.

In addition, there are implications for other areas within the social sciences, including gender, family, stratification, and so forth. For example, service work tends to be gendered and additionally, many service jobs "are ones in which women predominate and which are associated with a range of poor conditions, such as low wages and extremely limited career prospects" (Kerfoot and Korczynski 2005: 388). These authors cite a case where the airline Pan-American hired more women because "there was a clear 'passenger preference' for female cabin crew" and that "male passengers (who made up the majority of passengers) would generally feel more masculine and thus more at ease in the presence of a young female attendant" (Kerfoot and Korczynski 390-391).

Though Kerfoot and Korczynski's study was conducted in the early 1980s, it is easy to see that, when a company is making efforts to attract and keep customers, many factors come into play, some of which may be related to gender and class. If women are doing a majority of the emotion management in their jobs, and these jobs are not as well compensated as other jobs might be, an investigation into expectations of those doing customer service work will also benefit these other areas within sociology. Especially in the new experience economy, any further understanding of the ways in which emotion management affects individuals and groups is an important contribution to the understanding of social life.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of my study has been to describe the nature of a change in customer service within financial institutions and to explain the reasons for this change. A content analysis of employment advertisements and bank advertisements from the *New York Times* has shown a trend toward the mention of "customer service skills" and away from "clerical experience" in the desired attributes of a bank teller. Other terms investigated did not present such conclusive evidence, however, the results of the study combined with other evidence such as online advertisements and an extensive review of the evolution of customer service both within and outside of the financial industry has shown that banks and other companies are increasingly focusing on the customer as the key to their financial success.

Though my content analysis does not prove that banks are explicitly using Disney as a model for their customer service, it has been shown that several banks have used Disney as a model (Bank of America and Nationsbank, for instance (Our Clients 2007)). Even so, the emphasis on the customer is something that Disney is well known for and, as has been shown, Disney is a model that companies look toward when forming their own customer services strategies because of this.

The theory of institutional isomorphism can be used to explain why financial organizations model Disney's customer service approach. Bank executives attend the Disney Institute, read Disney's customer service manuals, and find ways to apply Disney's principles in their own organizations. This may be, in accordance with the mimetic process of isomorphism, because bank executives are looking for ways to improve the customer service provided by their companies, and they see Disney as a legitimate and successful model to follow. Or, the modeling of Disney by financial companies could be explained using the normative process, whereby banking professionals have been socialized in the same ways, and belong to the same professional organizations. Banking professionals with similar norms may be more likely to adopt the same kinds of innovations and get their information from the same places, such as trade magazines.

The purpose of my study is not to suggest whether it is rational for such institutions as banks to model an entertainment company, but rather to show that it is in fact happening and offer an explanation as to why dissimilar companies would model each other. The Disney Institute suggests that all organizations that serve customers are essentially the same, regardless of whether the customers are patients, guests, or consumers (Disney Institute 2001:22). As has been shown, hospitals, hotels, retail establishments, car companies, banks, and numerous other types of organizations do believe this and follow Disney's lead by trying to perform for their customers in order to attract and retain them.

The disneyization described in my study of the banking industry is a part of Bryman's larger "Disneyization of Society". As Bryman suggests, Disneyization is an adaptation of the well-known McDonaldization of Society, where elements of society become more rationalized and homogenous. Disneyization can be seen as a "parallel process" (Bryman 2004:13) in which certain parts of society adopt the Disney theme park principles. Bryman suggests that the process of Disneyization is not as extensive as McDonaldization, but that it is likely a process that will continue to grow (2004:177). If Disneyization does continue to grow (and much of the evidence presented here suggests that it is likely) the process should be paid close attention to by anyone looking to understand the relationship between the worker, the customer, and the company, and on a larger scale, economy and society.

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