

How Organizational Logics, Feelings Rules, and Emotional Labor Impact African American
Women Professionals' Navigation of Workspaces

By

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Introduction

Perhaps no public setting better reflects the cultural styles and preferences of the American mainstream than the corporate world. As Feagin and Sikes observe in *Living with Racism*, “black people in corporate America are under constant pressure to adapt... to have the values and ways of the white world” (Feagin and Sikes, 1994). In today’s 21st century work place the very nature of the social relationships in the office is not neutral nor egalitarian, instead it is dictated by historical customs, which have been traditionally white, male, able-bodied, heteronormative, and middle class centered (Feagin and Sikes, 1994). It was not until after Executive order 11246 mandating affirmative action was implemented (US Department of Labor, 2002) did employers actively seek ways to include women and racial minorities within organizations and agencies hierarchies. More inclusive and progressive policies might have changed on paper, but did not change institutionally. For example, white men, the carriers of organizational culture and authority in workplace settings and in society writ large (Acker, 1990, Kanter, 1977) still sustained their bureaucratic arm of professional and managerial expansion that included making decisions regarding acceptable behavior, communication, skin color, style and dress, which all worked to centralize white, male, middle class cultural tastes as standard of “professionality” and “intelligence” (Wingfield & Alston 2013). As one can imagine, this has had discriminatory implications for women of all ethnicities and other minority groups like LGBTQ folks and disabled folks who become employed within these white male centered spaces because they often do not fit neither the gendered or racialized norms of these environments. In a recent study, Jennifer Pierce (2012) provides an example of how organizational culture is implicitly racialized in law firms. She analyzes the present-day reactions to affirmative action within a large firm and finds that many white male attorneys embrace a narrative of unqualified, underserving minorities who have secured jobs within the

legal field that they did not truly earn or deserve. Pierce's (2012) work reveals that white male attorneys are able to establish a culture within the organization where white men are tacitly cast as the most suitable for the high status legal work performed in private firms. As a result, the emotional labor was disproportionately placed on workers of color in the organization and they were often mandated to fulfill the racial tasks/ racialized emotional labor showing that the workplace is equitable for everyone even though these environments are very discriminatory (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). Emotional labor occurs when feelings are exchanged for value and feeling rules dictate what types of feelings one is allowed to have in certain environments. (Hoschild, 1983) Taking the practices of racism and sexism into account, how then does a seemingly egalitarian, cosmopolitan, and bureaucratic setting like the workplace at meso level lead to social consequences in black women lives and how do these interactions contribute to macro level gendered, classed, and racialized inequality? I examine these interactions by conducting in depth interviews with black women professionals to illuminate how they navigate the everyday experiences of discrimination in the workplace and how they manage their emotions within these largely white and male environments. Very little is written about black women executives, managers, and professionals and how their unique identity is associated with personal and professional well-being. Although the literature on professional women only provides a glimpse into the experiences of black women, it is helpful in providing a perspective on what they undergo as women moving into professional roles. Therefore, in order to attend to this, I am using the theory of emotional labor to show how race, class, and gender matter in understanding the mechanisms through which these obvious yet clandestine operations of emotional labor are promoting both racialized and gendered inequalities, and how it manifests through discriminatory actions that require black women to employ unique skills to navigate this rugged terrain.

Background

After making tremendous achievements in creating forms of gender and racial inclusion within predominately white professions, black professional women still face various forms of discrimination which prevent them from climbing the corporate ladder and are significant sources of stress and stress related adverse health outcomes. Due to legislative gains of the Civil Rights and gender equality movements in the United States, women's overall involvement in the workplace has been on the rise for a number of years (Nelson & Burke, 2000). Women within professional organizations and occupations have made substantial strides, including gaining increases in income, advancing into higher level positions, and expanding their presence across a diversity of professional occupations (Combs, 2003). Currently, the United States workforce is made up of 49.6% women (U.S Census Bureau, 2011). Of that percentage, 51.4% are employed in management, professional, and related occupations (U.S Census Bureau, 2011). According to a 2003 Current Population Survey report in 2002, African American women in the workplace totaled 8,469,000 or 5.8 percent of the labor force, but by 2010, they will compose 7 percent of 11,050,000 persons in the labor force, almost a 60 percent increase from 1990. This same report suggests that in 2010, 2,412,000 black women held 5 percent of all administrative and managerial posts in professional and related occupations.

Although progress has been made in equalizing the workplace playing field for upward mobility, 2016 Pew Study shows that the hourly earnings of white and asian women are higher than those of black and latina women. White and asian women have narrowed the wage gap with white men to a much greater degree than black and Hispanic women. For example, white women narrowed the wage gap in median hourly earnings by 22 cents, from earning 56 cents for every dollar earned by a white man in 2015. By comparison, black women only narrowed that gap by 9 cents, from earning

56 cents for every dollar earned by a white man in 1980 to 65 cents today (Pew Center, 2017) Despite significant increases in the number of middle class black women professionals, they still confront racial discrimination in their work settings. Despite progress, black women still encounter “glass ceilings” and black managers still endure subjective critiques assessing their fit with the corporate culture.

Much of the scholarship that addresses the proportion of and experiences of women in professional workplace environments have not considered race and have at default looked at mostly middle class white women. As a result, the social processes that create discriminatory environments and how these environments impact African American women have often been overlooked. Studies of racial and gender populations, such as African American women, and their experiences in professional settings rarely include problems and issues faced by the specific population under study or within group interactions. (Bell et al., 1993). Furthermore, most of the literature on experiences of discrimination in the workplace creates a myopic narrative that the people who are disproportionately impacted are white women or minority men (Bell et al, 1993; Lach, 1999 as cited in Combs, 2003). Professional black women are an important group to study because of their limited examination by researchers in the fields of public health, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. One answer to this question as to why this erasure of African American women’s experiences occurs within research agendas is because, according to sociologists Rayshawn Ray and Kris Marsh (2014), investigations on middle class black women are seen as superfluous because there is an assumption within a supposedly post-racial, Obama era that these groups of individuals are “respectable” and have achieved a “mythological space of wellness and well-being , even as the prisons and ghettos overflow with black bodies” (Alexander, 2010).

While an increasing number of black middle class women entering professional and corporate positions have reportedly experienced a positive impact on their careers, these changes have also led to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and other challenges (Mercer, Heacock, & Beck, 1993; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Griffith et al, 2009; Griffith, Neighbors, & Johnson, 2009). For example, Charisse Jones and Kumea Shorter-Gooden (2003) found in their studies of middle class African American professional women that these women felt that, “in their endless quest to prove themselves, and put others at ease, many black women break down emotionally or physically under the pressure, their lives stripped of joy” (p. 8). Jones and Shorter- Gooden (2003) found that because these women are not able to handle the onslaught of negative messages, their sense of self falters and they start to believe falsehoods regarding their value, and subsequently begin doubting their own worth and capabilities. Consequently, they become susceptible to an array of psychological problems including anxiety, low self-esteem, disordered eating, depression, and even outright self-hatred. Research consistently shows that black women are less happy and experience more discontent in the workplace than black men, white men, or white women (Hudson, Neighbors, Geronimus, et al., 2016). Racial and gender discrimination increase the stress of black women. According to the US. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), black women experience occupational disadvantages based on gender and race (Hamilton- Mason, Evette & Hall, 2009). For example, they are likely to work in support positions where there are fewer rewards and less opportunities for advancement or skill use and to work in jobs that are overall less secure than those held in greater proportion by men (Hughes & Dodge, 1997; US Census Bureau, 2006).

The consequences of stress on black women are numerous. Researchers have shown that exposure to racial discrimination is a potent stressor that is related to increased levels of depressive symptoms as well as increased odds of depression (Hudson et al., 2012; Kessler, Mickelson &

Williams, 1999). Research has also shown that this group of women have higher infant mortality rates, suffer higher rates of high blood pressure, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, have high levels of emotional distress and a low sense of general wellbeing that can be linked directly to stressors of their everyday lives and especially their workplace environments (Mercer, Heacock & Beck, 1993; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Griffith, Neighbors, & Johnson, 2009). It is possible that sometimes the high-effort coping strategies used by African American women of higher SES in response to stressful situations are sometimes related to racial and gender discrimination, such as job loss or being passed over for promotion, as situations that can be altered by hard work (Geronimus & Thompson, 2004). However, high-effort coping might be a “mental health cost” paid by African American women who maintain greater levels of sustained effort and energy expenditures in order to cope with stress (Cole & Omari, 2003). However, not all coping is bad: researchers have argued that coping strategies can serve a protective function against the negative effects of racism (Clark et al. 1999; Harrell 2000). Although there is ample research that links racism to mental health outcomes for African Americans and has explored coping strategies that can serve as a buffer to racism, there is a dearth of research exploring the coping strategies that black women use to deal with the negative effects of the intersection of racism and sexism (for exceptions, see Barnett et al. 1987; Beauboeuf-Lafontant 2007; and Woods-Giscombé 2010).

Statement of Problem

In depth, social scientific studies dealing centrally and thoroughly with the voices and experiences of black professional women are still relatively few. Most assessments on this topic are relatively short analyses placed in journal articles or in edited anthologies, or they take the form of personal memoirs or general essays. Some field research studies of black women focus on poor black women’s experiences at work or their experiences in navigating the social welfare

system and the prison industrial complex. Despite the paucity of research on middle class African American women, contemporary studies of middle class African American professional women experiencing persistent discrimination despite their educational and occupational achievements provide strong evidence of the central role of discrimination in the lives of these women.

Examining black professional women's interactions in the workplace is important because the workplace is one of the most quintessential areas to examine gender inequality on the micro scale to see how it perpetuates larger scale macro inequalities (Acker, 1990; Williams, Muller, & Kilanski, 2012). However, as has been pointed out by other scholars, Acker and colleagues failed to identify in detail the racial dynamics of how interactions in the workplace produce large scale gender and racial inequalities. In order to study the interaction of racial and gender power dynamics within workplaces environments, I aim to track what political scientist Tiffany Willoughby-Herard (2014) describes as the disproportionate labor that black academics endure within higher education. This disproportionate labor has been described as a type of "mammization" (Willoughby-Herard, 2014) or "minority identity taxation" (Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012) as well as a hidden curriculum of "plantation politics" (McKittrick, 2006) that lie at the foundation of modern labor markets in a late capital era. The study of "plantation politics" is conjoined within larger conversations pertaining to the critique of insidious forms of scientific knowledge that posit that blacks have higher thresholds of pain and have a supposed natural ability to perform certain sorts of strenuous labor. These mythologies justified and currently justifies their subordination and reifies a false scientific mythology about black women's strength and supposed innate aptitude to perform specific types of labor without question. My project seeks to extend this analysis to the microscale in order to examine the ways in which the

emotional labor -- shaped by organizational logics -- carried out by middle class African American women recuperates and sustains gendered, racialized, and class-based disparities and categories within the US.

Organizational logics, feeling rules and emotional labor are the gendered logics of control in workplaces that negatively impact women from obtaining authority and cause larger economic inequality for women and minorities. In order to examine these social phenomena, I have collected the rich narratives of professional African American women's detailed experiences of emotional labor and feeling rules inside of their work environments. To frame the data, I will employ sociological theories of emotional labor and feeling rules to specifically focus on the mechanisms through which the women use affective technologies to negotiate and navigate instances of discrimination. In order to provide more context of black women's labor in the US, I provide a brief literature review on the history of black women's work in 20th and 21st century US labor markets. Finally, I will utilize the theoretical frameworks of emotional labor and feeling rules to investigate the following questions: What types of discriminatory practices do gendered organizations within the workplace engender at the micro interactionist level? And also, what types of emotional labor do professional black women perform in these workplace environments and why?

Literature Review: Historicizing Black Women's Labor in the United States

Black feminist critic Barbara Christian asserts that in Americas, "the enslaved African women became the basis for the definition of our societies Other" (1985). Claimed by black feminist theorist bell hooks," the central ideological component of all systems of domination in Western society, dichotomous thinking or thinking in an either/or framework of categorizing people in terms of difference from one another causes discrimination. Objectification is central to

this process of oppositional difference. In “either/ or “dichotomous thinking, one element is objectified as the Other, and is viewed as an object to be manipulated and controlled. Social theorist Dona Richards (1980) suggests that western thought requires objectification, a process she described as the “separation of the knowing self from the known object”.

In the United States, differentiations on the basis of perceived race, socioeconomic status, sexuality, and gender have had a particularly longstanding influence on the life chances of individuals and groups. Historical patterns of objectification and domination privileges whites over people of color, men over women, heterosexuals over persons of other sexualities, and the affluent over those without wealth. These oppositions contribute to an overarching “matrix of domination” (Collins, 2000) composed of numerous simultaneous and interlocking distinctions. For African American women, intersections of race and gender create particular stereotypes that profoundly shape many aspects of their lives (Collins, 1990; 2004). Angela Davis (1971) and other scholars elucidate that during slavery this scientific knowledge was utilized to justify why black women were exploited sexually as women and had to do the same arduous work as men (Aptheker, 1982; Davis, 1971; Fox-Genovese, 1988; Lerner, 1972; White 1985).

In Angela Davis’s book titled *Women, Race, and Class*, she posits that in order to sustain the power dynamics of the white slave holding elites and their patriarchal control of over capital producing bodies, white slave owners created a binary oppositional structure that contrast the patriarchal image of White middle class women as weak, dependent, passive, to black women being thought of as hardworking, strong, dominant, and sexually promiscuous (Davis, 1981; Hooks, 1981). During the decades preceding the Civil War, Black women were praised for their remarkable labor and fertility, however they were not praised as productive nor feminine mothers. The ideological appraisal of motherhood did not extent to slaves, in fact in the eyes of

slave owners, slave women were not mothers at all: they were seen as *simply* the labor force that bred a slave labor force. According to Angela Davis, slave women's status as both female and property produced unique violence emitted on their flesh, Davis writes:

As females, slave women were inherently vulnerable to all forms of sexual coercion. If the most violent punishment of men consisted on floggings and mutilation, women were flogged and mutilated as well as raped. Rape in fact was an un-camouflaged expression of the slaveholder's economic mastery and the overseer control over Black women as workers. These special abuses inflicted on women thus facilitated the ruthless economic exploitation of labor. (pg.6)

To further add to this, sociologist Patricia Hill Collins highlights in her book, *Black Feminist Thought*, that social stereotypes along with violent acts of abuse, sustain structural oppression and labor exploitation of Black women in the US. The "controlling images" of black womanhood described by Collins (1990) include the asexual Mammy, the castrating black matriarch, the hypersexual Jezebel, and the crass Sapphire. As representations of subordinated groups, controlling images guide behavior toward and from these persons, constrain what is seen and believed about them and as products of the social organization of power, such images define the parameters of appropriate and transgressive subject positions for a particular group. For example, the aforementioned controlling stereotypical characters that represent black women are not only racialized but gendered in their portrayal of Black women's inability to fit the dominant ideal of motherhood, and in their implicit messages that as unfit mothers, Black women fall short of the larger ideal of appropriate womanhood. In order to secure material conditions of subordination, such images draw both power and resistance potential away from oppressed persons (Collins ,1990). Because controlling images are deployed to bring thought and behavior

in accordance with the matrix of domination to cause people to become “docile bodies” (Foucault 1977) rather than transformative subjects, they provide a disguise, or mystification of objective social relations” (Carby, 1987). Rendering social injustices into natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life, (Hill Collins 2000), controlling images are the ideological glue that secures the matrix of domination and its goal of producing rich, white, Christian, male, heterosexual power” (Bem 1995, see also, Connell 1995; Hill Collins 2000; Ridgeway & Correll 2005, Risman 2004).

Due to these interlocking systems of oppression, after the abolition of slavery, Black women were systematically forced to take the worst paying jobs in both male and female sectors of work and worked as domestics in white households due to discrimination that limited the number of blacks in semiskilled and skilled jobs (Hine, 1989). After the Civil Rights Movement, Black women gained entrance into traditionally white female occupations. These gendered and classed forms of racism were rationalized by ideological constructions of racially specific femininity and representing black women as fitting into the opposite models of white middle class womanhood. The Mammy and the iconic Aunt Jemima image, constructed in the 1830s were stereotypes that enabled white southern apologists to promote sentimental view of US social relations under slavery (Gray White, 1999). Controlling images of black women functioned as foils to the white lady, a paragon of female beauty, virtue, and leisure. Furthermore, black women’s physical characteristics were read as robust rather than fragile, and this marker for their natural proclivity for heavy labor. Hardworking, powerless and committed to white rule, the Mammy and the Aunt Jemina figure that naturalized the idea that black women were supposed to be subservient and willing to nurture and reproduce white capital with no regard to their personal desires, aspirations, or health. As a result, the mammy or the strong black woman worker figure

(Omolade, 1994) contribute to the interactional dynamics that pressure black women to assume status reassuring deference to whites, particularly in workspaces. In her path breaking work titled about black women intellectuals *In Breaking bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life*, bell hooks (1991) writes:

[R]acist and sexist assumptions that black women are somehow “innately” more capable of caring for others continues to permeate cultural thinking about Black female roles. As a consequence, black women in all walks of life, from corporate professionals and university professors to service workers, complain that colleagues, coworkers, supervisors, ask them to assume multipurpose caretaker roles be their guidance counselor, nannies, therapists, priests. To be the all nurturing breast—to be the mammy. (pg. 154).

Some sociological studies have acknowledged that racism in the workplace is gendered and takes on different manifestations for minority men and women (Brown and Misra, 2003). St. Jean and Feagin’s (1998) study of racism and sexism impacting black women assessed that while black women experience the “double burden” of racism and sexism, some white employers viewed black women as more desirable coworkers and employees than black men because they are seen as less threatening. According to St. Jean and Feagin, white employers may view black women in this way because their gender makes them easily controllable through sexist put downs. Taking the practices of gendered racism into account, how then does a seemingly egalitarian, cosmopolitan, and bureaucratic setting like the workplace at meso level lead to biological consequences on Black women’s bodies at the micro level, while reifying macro level gendered, classed, and racialized inequality? Part of the answer to this enigma may lie in current scholarship in the fields of organizational sociology, the anthropology of work, critical race

theory, and health psychology which examine the ways in which the mundane, common sense logics of workplace behaviors and social interactions reify larger power dynamics of oppression and disenfranchisement for racialized women within society

Theoretical Frameworks: Gendered Organizations, Emotional Labor, and Feeling Rules

Gender, organizations and inequality scholars have long been interested in understanding the barriers women face in gaining access to positions of organized power. The “glass ceiling” metaphor has been invoked to describe the largely invisible processes of exclusion are critical to women’s access into these positions of power. Twenty- five years ago, Joan Acker (1990) theorized that organizations are not merely gender neutral sites where gender inequality is reconstituted, but that organizations themselves are gendered, reflecting and reproducing male advantage. Acker (1990) maintains that the very definition of a “job” embraces the notion of a white male worker who is dedicated to serving the company and withdraws from outside obligations. Williams and colleagues (2012) point out that Acker (1990) classified five processes that reproduce gender in organizations: the division of labor, cultural symbols, workplace interactions, individual identities, and organizational logics. What is of primary importance for this literature review is studying how the organizational logics within gendered organizations are utilized to reveal how echelons of power are naturalized and legitimized according to race and gender within organizations (Williams, Muller, & Kilanski, 2012). These hidden curricula of the “rules of rules” govern everything from the pay scales to the job evaluations to the networks to the voice inflections, hair styles, and fit of one’s attire. According to Acker (1990), organizational logic refers to the mundane doctrines that managers utilize to exert totalizing jurisdiction over the workplace all while appearing to be rationally driven and gender neutral. Moreover, Acker (1990) claims that these abstract systems masquerade as “truths” and uphold a gendered hierarchy that “continually reproduces the underlying gender assumptions and the subordinated or excluded place of women” (p. 154). For

example, organizations use supposedly logical principles to develop job descriptions and determine pay rates. However, Acker (1990) argues that managers, acting within the unspoken organizational logics of the workplace, often draw on gender stereotypes when undertaking these tasks, thus reinforcing gender inequality at work and contributing to the maintenance of gender inequality. Although William et al. (2012) and Acker (1990) highlight the abstract structures in workplaces that maintain and perpetuate class and gender inequality, they fail to study in detail the racial dynamics of the workplace that also engender certain types of violence and disenfranchisement within and outside the workplace. To attend to this gap, I will cross fertilize Adia Wingfield's scholarship on racialized *feeling rules* along with Arlie Hochschild's (1983) work on emotional labor that occur within the workplace. By using these tools, I will be able to provide a more detailed analysis of how racial stereotypes amalgam with gendered mythologies and scientific "truths" to produce unique types of emotional labor practiced by black professional women in workplace environments.

Workers employed in professional environments quickly learn that there are feeling rules that they are expected to follow in the workplace. When professional workers show deference or express anger, they do so generally because the feeling rules of their jobs mandate such emotional expressions are expected and normative (Hoschild. 1983; Lively, 2000). The works of Erving Goffman introduce us to the many minor traffic rules of face to face interaction. He prevents us from dismissing the small as trivial by showing how small rules, transgressions, and punishments add up to form the longer strips of experience we call work (Goffman,1955). Sociologist Arlie Hoschild also takes up this project with regards to gender and labor. In her seminal work, *The Managed Heart* (1983), she provides an extensive analysis about the ways in which emotions are commodified and structure in work environments. She argues that in an increasingly service oriented economy, emotions become yet another form of labor that workers must produce and sell in the capitalist marketplace. Organizations demand that employers muster emotions that are appropriate to their occupations, and these emotional exchanges thus become

part of the job. Hochschild argues that critical to this process are the feeling rules that guide everyday emotional exchanges in the workplace and in other settings more generally and writes these rules, “guide emotion work by establishing the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges” (pg. 56)

Existing research establishes that feeling rules, far from being neutral, are gendered, with different rules applied to men and women workers. As such these rules reinforce gender boundaries by specifying which emotional displays are acceptable for men but not for women. For instance, Jennifer Pierce (1995) finds that women litigators are penalized for displaying emotions such as anger and aggression, even though these feelings are expected of men in this heavily male profession. In the same study, she argues that men paralegals are discouraged from doing deference and caretaking, the feeling rules that are expected from their women counterparts (see also Lively 2000). This work argues that emotional norms, like occupations and organizations themselves, are intrinsically gendered in ways that perpetuate inequality between men and women employees (Acker 1990) Yet most of the studies in this area fail to consider how emotional norms may also be selectively applied to workers of different races, (see Harlow 2003 and Kang 2003 for exceptions. As Kiran Mirchandani (2003) argued, studies of emotion work typically assume a white worker in a racially homogenous white environment. This is problematic as research therefore privileges the experiences of white workers and ignores the way emotion work may be differently performed and experienced for minority employees in predominately white settings.

Sociologist of work and occupations, Adia Wingfield (2010) utilizes Hochschild’s (1983) theory of emotional labor to investigate how *feeling rules* can be understood as the norms and guidelines that regulate emotion work or emotion management and are influenced by the environment that they are enacted in. For example, the flight attendants in Hochschild’s (1983) original study understand that the feeling rules of their job requires that they hide rather than showcase how perturbed they feel with

passengers. Instead of displaying annoyance, they perform feelings of tranquility, patience, and friendliness. When these feelings become, produced and exchanged for wages, workers are performing what Hochschild describes as emotional labor. Studies exploring the concept of embodied characteristics of workers are based largely on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984). The expectation of workers hired to perform aesthetic labor is that they are not merely “acting” or performing a role in a specific employment context but rather expressing deep seated dispositions. In other words, employers are looking for workers who already embody a particular habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu’s concept of habitus refers to mannerisms that are acquired in childhoods and that are difficult to alter later in life. An example of the workplace effects of white male centered habitus would be institutions of higher education.

Roxanna Harlow’s (2003) study explores the process of how emotion management is racialized for Black female professors in the US. In Harlow’s study, she revealed that the negative controlling images that white students had of Black female professors lead to disputes in the classrooms and consequently, Black faculty had to control their anger in order to teach effectively and adhere to professional standards. In other words, Black professors had to embrace the rules of their profession and ideologies about of gender to be calm and professional. She argues that black college and university professors engage in emotion management to content with racialized classroom dynamics where their authority and intellectual capabilities are routinely challenged. black faculty members encounter white students, black students, and nonblack students who perceive blacks as inferior and unintelligent and therefor dispute black professor’s knowledge. In response, black faculty perform emotion management to control their feelings of anger and frustration in order to tech effectively and adhere to professional standards. Harlow (2003) also finds that black women professors in particular content with white student’s perceptions that they are mean, cold, and intimidating. This image is a specifically raced and gendered one that placed black women outside the bounds of acceptable femininity, which suggest that

women should be nurturing and caring. Black women professors cope with this image by doing emotion work that allows them to maintain a sense of professionalism in the face of racialized and gendered perceptions. For these women, emotion work is a necessary strategy for addressing the ways intersections of race and gender overlap to produce stereotypes that lead to adverse interpretations of their classroom performance. Other work, however suggests that black women may operate within the context of these stereotypes as a way of navigating hostile or unwelcoming environments (Harvey Wingfield, 2007; Ong 2005)

In conversation with impact of the practice of emotional labor for black women professionals is sociologist Maria Ong 's (2005) scholarship that highlights how black women students in the predominately white male field of physics may deliberately adopt a "loud black girl" persona that plays into white colleague's stereotypical images, but also enables black women to assert themselves in a field where they are highly visible and in the minority. Building on this argument, Ong's research indicates that these same stereotypes may offer a way for black women to assert themselves. Taken together, these studies show that race and gender matter in understanding how emotion work is structured and what types of emotion work are performed in professional settings.

Methods

Recruitment and Interview Protocol

Semi- structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 10 African American middle class professional women in a variety of occupations in the fall of 2016 and winter 2017 (Richards, 2017). Respondents were all college educated and ranged in age from 25 to 67 and like many other middle class African American women they worked in majority white settings (Cole and Omari, 2003). All of the women interviewed identified as both black and women and they were employed in professional occupations. These interviews invited middle class African American professional women to share their

narratives and experiences of being marked by race and gender and how this influences what types of labor they perform within spaces. The study received IRB approval through Vanderbilt University's Institutional Review Board. In order to maintain a focus on middle class African American women professional women.

To also add more depth to the study, I also attended a bi monthly professionalization seminar that discussed race and gender relations in the workplace. This seminar consisted of a gathering of black male and female professionals. I wanted to see how professionalization and emotional labor were being discussed within these very private circles of black professionals. It was during these meetings that I introduced myself to some of the African American professional women and told them about my research study and organized meetings to interview them in person or over the phone. I utilized the informants that I developed a connection with and proceeded to use snowball sampling to create the data set, beginning with respondents that I knew personally, and asking these subjects to refer me to others who fit the criteria for the study. My informant was able to grant me access into her close networks of African American women professionals who were all a part of an athletics group that exercised together. I contacted professionals who were members of the black led professional organizations. From there I contacted the women via the emails listed on the meetup profiles to ask them to be interviewed in person or on the phone. The interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes each.

Data Analysis

Interview questions focused specifically on ways black workers negotiated emotional performances in the context of their work environments. Highlights from the interviews alongside field notes were transcribed and uploaded onto a secure storage system. All names have been changed to ensure confidentiality. The interviews underwent a process of coding and labeling (Richards, 2015) where I identified where the key topics and themes from the data that were being studied. The data was labeled with themes and then the data underwent a process of coding where specific codes are generated

that describe the phenomenon under study. I decided to approach the data through an “abductive analysis” approach (Tavory and Timmerman, 2014), an analytical approach in which the researcher remains immersed in the relevant literature while analyzing data in order to generate novel findings that emerge from the data that contribute to the literature. Lastly, one of the primary research methods of this study utilize an interdisciplinary examination of peer reviewed literature from the fields of sociology of work, occupations and organization, social psychology, Critical theory, women and gender studies, African American studies, Science and Technology studies, surveillance studies, and anthropology.

Results

“Mouth Full of Cotton-Candy”: Performance of Gendered Judo Flips

One of my first interviews was conducted with a Black woman professor and we discussed how she navigates through white and predominately male workplace environments. During our conversation, she highlighted the types of gender performance that she has to utilize when in the presence of men in the workplace. When I asked her to give me more detail as to what the gender performance looked like, she expressed that she had to display a more stereotypically feminine demeanor in order to achieve her goals and acquire resources. For example, during the interview she stated:

I am really careful about the way that I present myself and my image,” she said. “The way I present myself changes depending on who I’m meeting with.” When I’m meeting with high-level university officials, I barely talk and I usually act “shy and respectful”. And I’m very clearly like the subordinate person in the room. But then in other meetings where I’m more familiar with people or I’m in more of a leadership role, then I would act a lot more direct and authoritative. But, at the same time, I’m still known for always being like really nice and someone who sort of comes up with little jokes, is fun at meetings.

Another example of this tactic of using gender stereotypes to navigate the workplace was when another black woman professional that I interviewed recalled her mentor warning her that “*trying to be the man didn’t work because you immediately get called the bitch.*” She shared with me that her mentor recommended a type of manipulation of gender roles, she states:

I just started to see my mentor using her charm in the way that she talked to people, smiling a lot, and she became a lot more of herself and people received her better. And I tried—and that really stuck with me. A fellow engineer told me one time that I was very assertive in a very sweet way. Heck yes, I get what I want in a very sweet way.... Doesn’t antagonize anybody and it Doesn’t step on anyone’s toes and most importantly, I still have a job.

In this woman’s account, it can be observed that this description of what black women professionals are evoking when using gender roles highlights a very important aspect to the gendered dynamics of organizational logics of workspaces as well as its relation to the types of feeling rules that are demanded of employees. In their narratives, these women expressed that through the mentorship of other women in their workplace they were able to use traditionally stereotypical gender roles to their advantage in order to navigate the workplace. This strategic negotiation of gender performance is very much in line with the theory of gender judo. Gender judo occurs when women take feminine stereotypes that can hold women back, (ie, the obedient and subservient housewife, the stereotypical selfless mother and the dutiful daughter) to propel themselves forward (Williams, 2014). The martial art form of judo, which means “gentle way” in Japanese, focuses on using your opponents’ momentum to overpower him. One of the most common strategies in gender judo involves mixing strong messages of competence or masculinity with equally strong messages of warmth or femininity in order to achieve their goals and navigate interpersonal and occupational barriers in the workplace.

Another woman that I interviewed also described being overly sweet as a gender judo flip technique that led to her completing her tasks or getting her work done via her interpersonal dynamics in the workplace. She noted that when talking with other professionals in the workplace she tends to be a very direct speaker due to the fact that because she is both a minority and a woman that people will silence her or will not take her seriously. She recalled an instance where she spoke very directly to the chair of her department and that he got very angry and told her:

Don't talk to me like that! I had heard male colleagues talking that way, without incident, but for me I felt that I had to put cotton candy in my mouth and do a lot of deferring. For example, saying, I had to say things like "I just can't do this without your help", or "I really need you to do this". Basically, I had to play like a little Black Damsel in Distress! I had to put my chair in the masculine role, and I had to take the feminine role. And a lot of times, that was how I had to deal with him in order to get what I needed to get things done. What's funny is that I see that white women can and do get away with being direct, whereas with me, it was seen as more threatening and aggressive because its coming from a black woman with a degree. They might feel intimidate. I don't know.

Similarly, when I attended a black professional workshop distributing information to minority students on how to navigate hostile workplace environments, one of the reoccurring themes was using “sweetness” or kindness when experiencing microaggressions or discrimination in the workplace. This woman’s account of how she felt that she had to place “cotton candy in her mouth” when negotiating authority with men in her workplace, signals a longer historical method of black women employing what historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham calls the “politics of respectability” (Higginbotham, 1993). As a result of the scientific justification of the sexual assault on Black women by slave owners and their wives during 19th and 20th century US, black women have historically undergone an immense amount of emotional labor in order to construct and perform a politics of being ladylike and respectable. According

to Darlene Clark Hine in her essay, *Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West*, as a response to assaults upon black sexuality during the 20th century, black women created a performance of silence, a culture of dissemblance, in order to protect the sanctity of inner aspects of their lives (Hine, 1989). Black middle class women reconstructed and represented their sexuality through its absence. They emotionally labored to combat pervasive negative images and stereotypes and scientific notions of black sexual deviancy and instead mimicked white middle class women's embodiment of the cult of true womanhood. Black clubwomen's adherence to Victorian ideology as well as their self representation as super moral, according to Hine, was perceived as crucial not only to the protection and upward mobility of black women, but also to the attainment of respect, justice, and opportunity for all black Americans. The emotional labor behind the notion of "racial uplift" among black Americans during the late nineteenth and early 20th century illustrates how a history of respectability echoes into black women's 21st century labor relations.

Yet another example of this use of "cotton candy" or sweetness in the face of opposing was shared by another woman, who earlier in her career, suffered a traumatic brain injury. In the interview, she recalls when some White males who worked for her came to visit her in the hospital and she says:

I asked them the questions that a boss would ask, like 'Where are we with the project? Did you take care of this and that and that?'" The hospital staff said that I was, "unnecessarily brusque, undeferential" and that I "needed to stay in rehabilitation longer until I started acting like a woman." I was so frustrated. It was when one of my colleagues suggested I act the part of a "Southern belle" so I dropped my IQ by several points and started looking for little things to decorate myself with. It was so strange, I started raising the pitch of my voice and chose pink hospital gowns and then all of a sudden, they let me out.

The prominent themes that are eye catching in this woman's narrative are the significance of the pink robes, the use of tone of voice, the lowering of ones IQ, and also the mobilization of the "white southern Belle" figure. For me this account raised the question of investigating What does it mean to evoke a racialized performance of gender? Perhaps helpful to understanding this finding is historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's formulations of the metalanguage of race. Put simply, this theory posits that there are racialized dimensions of gender (Higginbotham,1992). For example, in the case of this woman, the dramaturgical performance of acting like a good southern belle literally translated into her acting like a "proper woman" or a white woman. What is unique about this finding is that it expands the gender judo flip theory by illustrating that there is also a racial component intrinsic with the performance of acting "sweet" or being feminine/ladylike. In this particular case this woman was disciplined for being an assertive black woman and in order to circumvent this punishment, she found that acting like a white woman actually allowed her to be "set free" or be granted freedom from the hospital.

Racialized and Gendered Feeling Rules

One respondent that I communicated with explained her decision to leave her job as fueled in part by the "intolerable" racial climate she experienced as the only black employee at her workplace. She describes white colleagues who shun her in the office, exclude her from team outings, and take things from her desk without asking. For this woman, these occurrences represented a clear pattern of racist and sexist behavior. Despite these incidents, she still attempts to conform to organizational feeling rules that she maintains a pleasant exterior:

[I know] they are uncomfortable with me. My mother suggested smiling after my sentences. I felt like a coon for the first month and a half, but I made a concerted effort to be polite and what it all came down to was that it didn't matter. I tried to be very polite, to establish myself as friendly and very positive in order to make my colleagues

comfortable. Because if I show any other emotion other than friendliness, they all just snatch their pearls and make me look like the angry black woman.

Despite her description of near-constant racial tension at this job, she still tries to follow the feeling rules mandated by this workplace. However, in the context of dealing with what she perceives as racial harassment, the expectation that she will maintain this pleasant exterior becomes significantly more difficult. For Theresa, adhering to these feeling rules is racialized in that it makes her “fe[el] like a coon.” In this case, having to uphold this feeling rule evokes the stereotypical image of the happy-go-lucky black person who is always smiling and entertaining regardless of the circumstances. This finding from the interview can be linked to how feeling rules operate in professional environments. For example, one key feeling rule of many professional environments is that workers are expected to display an affable, pleasant demeanor (Chase, 1995). Organizational norms generally dictate that professional employees should be agreeable, courteous, and amiable towards colleagues, clients, and customers. This often times can be applied directly to women because of the surrounding mythologies of them being servile, docile, caring and nurturing. (Collins, 2000) In professional settings where employee’s jobs necessitate a great deal of impersonal interaction, it makes sense that organizational feeling rules would include emotions that could facilitate establishing a pleasant work environment. Yet, while black professionals understand that the feeling rules of their jobs mandate displays of congeniality and likeability, they also argue that this feeling rule is difficult to sustain given the racism and sexism they encounter in their work environments. Specifically, dealing with the effects of discrimination in the form of racialized comments, stereotypes, and beliefs of gender inferiority from colleagues make presenting a pleasant demeanor more difficult. For many of these women, “performance” becomes their safety mechanism. In some cases, these performances, are conscious and intentional and are what Hochschild (1983) describes as “surface acting”. Surface acting occurs where the individual is well aware that they are putting on a show. For example, a respondent state:

I always prepare because I want to make sure my face and my temper is in check. You know I'm mellow, I have unhooked myself from personal feelings and previous conversations in order to deal with what's ahead to ensure the vitality of the company. I try to remain completely objective, no emotions just like a robot. I do this because so few black women or just women period are in managerial and executive level posts.

This woman's preparation of her face is a very savvy technique of navigating hostile workspaces. Important to this observation of the surveillance of one's face and how it relates to the racialized and gendered feeling rules practiced by black women professionals, is sociologist Erving Goffman's theory of *Face Work*. In this theory, Goffman defines the concept of face as an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes (Goffman, 1955). Put simply, the face is our projected self or the self-image we deploy in interactions with other human beings. Goffman claims that throughout social interaction we routinely engage in face work, and "maintaining facial composure" relies on processes of avoidance (circumventing potential threats to interactions) defensive measures (guiding interaction away from particular topics and activities) protective maneuvers (employing discretion and deception) and corrective processes (fixing threats to one's face). In this way, we can see that these black women's practice of *face work* involves emotional labor that is strategically used as strategy of achieving their goals or diverting hostile interactions with coworkers.

Another respondent from the study, also discussed with me some of the obstacles to conforming to the appropriate feeling rules in a workplace where she experiences discrimination. As a 51-year old senior manager for a major company, she is accustomed to working in predominantly white environments and is very aware of the challenges they will bring into her life. Having spent all of her professional life in such environments, she is quite familiar with how the "double burden" of being both black and a woman in these settings can manifest itself in a heightened sense of visibility and isolation and can dictate how she can express her feelings:

[There are] constant experiences but nothing noteworthy, or any one thing. The general thing is being in an environment where you are the minority, being around whites that tell you in many ways they don't want to be around you. They don't want you on their team, they don't care what you have to say. There's discrimination you feel and that you see, and it's a constant presence.

Another black women professional who I interviewed characterizes this as a general atmosphere rather than citing specific, concrete examples. In what she perceives as a racialized environment, she struggles to maintain the feeling norms necessary for someone in her position:

*What I'm mostly trying to do is feel comfortable. I don't lose my temper or anything like that, I don't control emotions like that, but really to relax and participate and get involved without the weight that I carry of feeling different and being looked at as though I'm different . . . I have to do this if I'm going to be make sure that my face and actions reflect the cool, calm manager I need to be. One time I did lose my cool because someone tried to circumvent my authority and be disrespectful, and when I tried to confront them calmly, he raised his hands and said jokingly, "Uh-oh, don't upset Sherrie, she might pull a knife out on us!". I was just depressed for days after that and did not quite know how to respond. So, as a result I changed my mantra into, "just maintain your cool, just maintain your cool because white folks be trippin and you might lose your job girl. **And** Im the only black woman in here? Girl please, you know and I know that that is the last thing I need. I meditate now and I am all about staying calm, keeping my face calm. If I get upset just a little bit, it might cost me my job and my health.*

According to this account the performance of and importance of facial rules can also determine what Max Weber deems, the "life chances" or opportunities one has to improve one's social standing. (Weber, 1978) We can imagine facial expression as akin to one's social position and can also be

construed as a form of capital and in the case of black women professionals trying to dodge the association of their emotional comportment with the stereotype of the angry black woman can have negative consequences for their accumulation of capital as well as their well-being. For example, another respondent from the study recalled her ability to play by the “rules” of the workplace:

*I've dealt with people who were so dismissive and you knew race was at the core of it. But I would have **to grin [emphasis mine]** and bear it because I needed to work. Very rarely do you see me expressing my true feelings, and when I do, my reaction tells me it scares the hell out of my white and nonblack colleagues. “If you don't play by their rules [emphasis mine] in terms of your behavior, modulating your emotions and if you don't do certain things the way they want you to do them, it has a direct impact on your career and your economic stability. I think the one thing that stands out the most is that I am a black professional woman in (names town). As much as I'd like to be upset about it, I can't ever do that in my job because it would come off the wrong way. So I have to be happy go lucky, everything's great, and the fact that I don't have a life is wonderful when it really sucks!*

These women apply a survival safety analysis and render their verbal participation to a lower level of priority. They smile on cue, remaining expressionless, unmoved by the content of conversation even if the subject is distressing or controversial, and carefully couching responses in the language of the workplace. The emotion that is concealed is evident in their voices body language and style of conversation. One of the reoccurring themes that links these women's narratives together is how important emotional labor is to their livelihoods and just how precarious their economic stability and mental health and wellbeing might be if they fail to abide.

“Mammy again, Mammy No More”: Racialized and Gendered Additional Labor

One example of racialized and gendered additional labor came from a black woman professional that I interviewed that noted that she feels she is seen as this “motherly nurturing” person in the department. She told me that male colleagues often sent students who were having problems to her because she was a woman and thought that she would be more nurturing than they were. She says:

I'm not a counselor, but I'm the only female in my department. And I work with a lot of foreign faculty members who have expectations of women. And the expectations that they have is that you know, women are supposed to be caring and nurturing and to take care of the kids. And it's like what am I some sort of mammy? My department is such a conundrum that shows its face when it's time to deal with race and gender. Like as a scholar and colleague no one trusts my intelligence, my credentials, nothing, but as a woman, a Black woman at that, I am somehow inherently able to “take care o dem babies”? Last time I checked, black women where emancipated and this ain't 1910! (laughter) To them I'm just another woman, Another Black woman, as long as I'm a nice nurturer it works for the department and it's like, Where's my check? Cut me a check, this is extra work that no one acknowledges. This is not going to help me get tenure, my research is! This extra mothering is not what I had in mind. If things are truly so equal in the workplace, why can't men be the nurtures? It's like, yeah, you can tell me all your problems because that's my job sort of you help you solve your problems as opposed to coping with my own!

Her reference to her departments expectation of her to take care of students more frequently because her being seen as the stereotypical black mammy link black women's historical labor as slaves in the United States to the more unspoken expectation of being a nurturing worker within the corporate sector from the men in her department to be nurturers. Here this respondent points to the ruse of the gender equality paradigm that workspaces have adopted in order for them to appear more equitable and

fair to everyone. She is in fact detailing that gender and racial equality have not quite been achieved where she works but she also points to the unpaid nature of this labor for herself as a racialized minority in a male dominated workspace.

Similarly, another respondent that I interviewed reported to me that she found from her personal experience that male faculty “*expected female faculty members to serve them tea or coffee or take notes.*” The woman further recalled that:

They [male colleagues], treat you like their mother, like they can get whatever you can from you, and there’s no limit. Like, if you keep helping, they keep asking and they have absolutely no regard for your needs or your goals as a career woman. Like some men will just expect that they can behave this way with women, and it’s cool! Its normal, its allowed! But if you dare complain about it or if you dare say, this is abusive or I feel as if I am being exploited, then you turn into the bitch. In my case, they already think that I am angry because Im black, so then if I complain they say that its reverse racism or something ridiculous like that, and that Im the black bitch.

In Patrica Hill Collins’s study of Black executives in the corporate world, she identifies black managers in diversity related positions as peace keepers, crisis managers, and conciliators who often have the responsibility of serving as a buffer between mostly white organizations and minority constituencies. Collins identifies this as “racialized labor” and highlights how black executives and black professionals more broadly, are called on and exclusively hired to address concerns related to minority constituents. However, workers who still hold these jobs might find themselves doing ideological racial tasks of upholding the organizations image as a fair and equitable environment despite any racialized practices that may occur to undermine this.

Embrace your inner “loud Black girl” to ascend up the corporate ladder

One very interesting exception to this rule of managing emotions to avoid negative stereotypes occurred among black women professionals. Some black women professionals believed that it was actually to their advantage to express honest emotions of anger and irritation periodically, despite their sense that this feeling rule was reserved for whites. Ironically, although research suggests that women generally are less able than men to follow feeling norms that allow for expressions of anger (see Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Martin 1999; Pierce, 1995), some black women in the sample feel that occasional displays of annoyance help them to be taken more seriously. For example, one respondent offers an example of giving voice to her feelings of irritation despite the knowledge that this is a risky option for as the only black woman in her workspace:

The main thing I had to control was not snapping on people. Why do I have to be in educator mode all the time, and always have to explain how stupid what you just said was? So, the main feelings I had to control were feelings of irritation and frustration. There was just no way to come in to work as angry as I sometimes was. But you know what? I took full advantage of the fact that they were a little afraid of me. They thought the big black boogey woman was going to come and get them. Sure, it might sound problematic but sometimes using their fears of me gave me the space to say what I needed to say. I embrace my loudness and my ability to stand up for myself. It grants me a feeling of strength. It was frustrating that they didn't want to get better at relating to people who were different. So, I said, "This is what I'm feeling.

In recounting these problems, during our interview the respondent was adamant and forceful. It was clear that these issues still bother her, and that had they irritated her enough that she felt that she finally had to speak up, despite the fact that doing so contradicts her sense that black workers are not supposed to show anger at racial issues. Notably, she also believes that white colleagues' fears of her give her opportunities, albeit infrequent, to challenge the feeling rule that black professionals can never

express anger. These fears being of her turning into the angry black woman and being gratuitously aggressive towards her workmates, are not completely over deterministic and disempowering. In fact, due to black women's intersectional position of not being seen as entirely feminine, and being considered more masculine than other racialized groups, this may grant them a space to be more assertive or loud when it comes to combating hostile environments, and uncomfortable situations.

Some of the black women professionals in this study expressed that they believe that it was actually to their advantage to express honest emotions of anger and irrationality periodically, despite their sense that this feeling rule was reserved for white men and women. Ironically, although research suggests that women generally are less able than men to follow feeling norms that allow for expressions of anger (see Erickson and Ritter 2001; Martin 1999; Pierce 1995), some black women in the sample feel that occasional displays of annoyance help them to be taken more seriously. In the case of maintaining classroom decorum and being assertive as a professor at a predominately white institution, a black woman noted:

I certainly can't walk in the classroom and come off as being timid, right? Because then students will try and walk all over me. You go in there, you're assertive, you lay down the rules of the syllabus on the first day. At least if you come off on that first day as being stern—I'm not saying you have to be nasty, of course, but very set and this is what you want to do, this is the goal of the class, this is my role, this is your role. It lays down the groundwork.

In relation to this finding of black women professors having to be more assertive in the classroom, a prior study found that Black professors (both men and women) tend to be judged as significantly less competent and legitimate than White and Asian-American professors—and were seen as having fewer interpersonal skills than Whites (Bavishi, Madera & Hebl, 2010). Black women respondents reported being keenly aware of the dilemma they are placed in when they experience a

gendered racial microaggression and decide to use their voice to stand up against an injustice. Often, Black women are further stigmatized as the “Angry Black woman” for standing up and fighting back in the situation, but some women are willing to take this risk to protect themselves against the negative effects of remaining silent. This is consistent with the sentiments of Audre Lorde (1980) in *The Cancer Journals* that even if she remained silent, she would not be safe.

These women expressed both the pros and cons to embracing their inner black girl. They expressed that on the one hand, expressing anger as a black woman might lead to job loss, or it could lead to boundaries of respect and caution to be set between black women and their coworkers. Displaying the correct quiet and passive emotional composure in the face of discrimination at the workplace might not always be the best solution, in fact, holding in emotions can produce detrimental effects for these women’s wellbeing. Recent public health studies have found that black women who stand in opposition and openly voice their concerns to forms of discrimination could also produce positive outcomes for their health. For example, in Nancy Krieger’s (2010) study of Black women with high blood pressure, she found that if Black women decide to defend themselves during a discriminatory encounter that their blood pressure levels would decrease and they would have a lower allostatic load and cortisol levels. Yet another study in the field of public health found that sometimes the emotional labor of not combatting discriminatory effects can cause one to experience high levels of stress and can contribute to the weathering and deterioration of one’s telomere length and health over time (Geronimus, 2010)

Discussion

I originally hypothesized that Black professional women would be negatively affected by socially constructed racial stereotypes that function to over determine their intellectual capacity to be respected and also would keep them at a disadvantage in terms of accessing resources and climbing the

corporate ladder. However, my research found that these professional black women mobilized negative stereotypes of the “loud black girl” or the “angry black woman” to their advantage. They were autonomous actors in knowing that by utilizing the negative stereotypes’ power and ongoing legacy within the collective consciousness of colleagues they work with, they would be able to yield some power to be assertive and to sustain a sense of authority in situations where they were experiencing racial and gendered microaggressions. These findings support what Maria Ong (2005) observes; that Black women students in the predominately white male field of physics may deliberately adopt a “loud black girl” persona that plays into white colleague’s stereotypical images, as a way to enable black women to assert themselves in places where they are both highly visible and invisible as minorities and buffer forms of discrimination that might be harmful to their health.

The literature is just now starting to expand its understanding on the social utility of negative stereotypes and how minorities might also use this to their advantage. This study helps to further demonstrate the need to expand the understanding of the impact of stereotypes and how they are utilized not just by the dominant groups in power, but by minorities as well. This study contributes to this emerging vein of literature by showing that the power relations relating to the mobilization and exploitation of the strong or angry black woman stereotypes are not as unilateral as shown in the previous literatures, which can paint an image of black women being perpetually powerless victims of stereotypes. Additionally, the exertion of power to yield and utilize stereotypes can be heavily influenced by one’s intersectional social identities to determine the effectiveness of the actions. For example, according to the literature, Asian women are seen by whites as more feminine than whites, and black women are seen by whites as more masculine (Galinski, Hall, Cuddy, 2013). An intersectional consideration of one’s social position can also be hypothesized as an important feature as to why black women employing negative stereotypes of race and gender were successful in achieving what they

wanted in the workplace. Given the results of this study, I am curious as to whether or not other minority groups use stereotypes to their advantage to achieve their goals and to navigate through hostile environments. Can the utilization of negative racial and gendered stereotypes for minorities help them combat stress? In other words, as opposed to the existing literature that shows that stereotypes can have detrimental effects for your health, in these instances depicted in this study, can both the use of emotional labor and mobilizing negative stereotypes be beneficial for one's health in helping them to combat stress and daily social antagonisms? I wonder how an intra-racial group study of African born Americans and African American women professionals would look like? Would they conduct different types of emotional labor? Also, do transgendered black professional women mobilize different forms of emotional labor or stereotypes to help them manage stress, or does this stigmatization of evoking the angry black woman stigmatize them more given their intersectional identity and social positionality?

This research also further supports the idea that the organizational logics of workplaces that subordinate gendered and racialized groups sustain the construction of a type of biopower that churns out docile bodies and workers and uses their very representation in the workplace as a way to mask structural inequalities at the micro scale and at the meso scale. After analyzing the results as well as the literature emerging from the fields of economic sociology, I can start to see a connection between the type of unspoken labor of affect that Black women produce and how this labor manifests into material and economic profit rates. What types of moral economies of labor are at work here? Is the emotional labor that Black women professionals are producing a form of biocapitalism? In other words, given black women's structural positioning as property and as commodifiable goods in the 21st century labor market, how are we able to separate black women as commodities from the commodities that they produce?

The data further helps to elucidate the actual transaction of the elusive material of emotions and illuminate's instances in which there is a very visible exchange of commodifiable goods through racialized and gendered feeling rules and additional gendered expectations demanded of black women in the workplace. For example, Collins (1997) has noted that racial and gender dynamics of organizational logics of workplaces function to Black employees' disadvantage in a variety of ways. Studying various aspects of work including layoffs and promotions, Wilson and his colleagues (1998) find that Black workers are typically given less authority and responsibility than their White peers, a fact that limits them when it comes to promotions and makes them more vulnerable when layoffs occur. Because Black employees are more likely to supervise other racial minorities, have less authority, and perform more narrowly described tasks, they must demonstrate their suitability for leadership positions more directly than White colleagues. To take a Marxist approach to addressing questions of labor and profit, using this study of affective labor and how it's a form of invisible, feminized labor that is marked as unvaluable, how then can we begin to further conversations of how emotional labor gets alienated from the worker? Perhaps investigating this question could further illuminate the process by which structural entanglements go through great means to make invisible emotional labor or to make it appear as purely voluntary in order to yield enormous corporate profit rates and perpetuated macroscale racial and gender economic equalities

Additionally, this research study grants us valuable insights into how to determine how black women professionals choose which gendered racial microaggressions to "battle." These findings revealed a dynamic and iterative process of coping. Black women in this study engaged in a secondary appraisal process of picking and choosing one's battles to determine which coping strategies they might employ, which supports and extends the transactional model of stress and coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1987). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1987), this secondary appraisal process consists of

evaluating whether certain actions could be taken to improve the potentially harmful and stressful situation (e.g., gendered racial microaggressions) and which coping strategies might be effective in dealing with the situation (e.g., resistance, collective, or self-protective strategies). This finding is consistent with previous research by Constantine et al. (2008), which found that Black faculty coped with racial microaggressions by “choosing one’s battles carefully,” which involved making intentional decisions about how to challenge microaggressions. Findings from this paper extend this research by highlighting the ways that picking and choosing one’s battles serve as a secondary appraisal process in coping with microaggressions. Perhaps this study could prompt future research to studying the microresistances to microaggressions practiced by Black women professionals through their evocation of emotional labor.

Conclusion

In my research, I argue that African American women professionals do practice emotional labor, and that feeling rules that they employ are racialized and differ from the rules and expression of emotions of other groups in the environment. This work contributes to a larger body of research that shows that these workplace environments are not neutral, but are in many ways essential to upholding the image of white male centered institutions as being an equitable space. This is an important contribution to the literature on emotion work which has tended to focus heavily on the ways that work reproduces gender inequality without devoting much attention to the ways it perpetuates racial imbalances. Kang (2003) showed that race intersects with gender and class to shape emotion work, however, the research presented in this paper shows that race informs the core emotional work that is carried out by black women workers. The results of this study extend Kanter’s (1997) classic concept of tokenism to show how it offers new sociological knowledge about emotion work and emotional culture in workplaces. As black women workers experience the marginalization, social isolation, and

heightened visibility that accompanies processes such as tokenization and gendered racism in the workplace, emotions of anger or frustration at racial issues are likely to emerge and have to be painstakingly negotiated through Black women professionals navigating how to not violate the feeling rules that are specifically applied to them as Black women so as not to suffer consequences that can affect their economic stability.

Furthermore, the feeling rules that operate in professional workplaces create and maintain an emotional economy of affect that reproduces racialized and gendered macro level inequality. Black employees' paths to promotion rest not only on objective criteria such as work performance, they—more so than their White peers—must also demonstrate soft skills such as personality and professionalism to offset discriminatory practices and be seriously considered for promotion (Moss & Tilly, 1996; Roscigno, 2007; Wilson & McBrier, 2005).'

The results of this study provide a framework for assessing the emotion work of many other marginalized groups in professional workplaces. This study focuses on the experiences of Black female professionals, however, one might imagine that different sets of feeling rules might also exist for other employees who are members of groups that are underrepresented in professional settings. For example, Latina and Asian American workers might find that they encounter forms of discrimination in professional settings that can lead to a distinct set of feeling rules they are mandated to follow. Asian American men, for instance, who are stereotyped as passive, feminine, and non-combative, may find themselves subjected to feeling rules that require emotions of complacency and geniality, while white colleagues are permitted to show a wider range of emotional expression (Espiritu, 2003)

Additionally, members of other groups who are tokenized, such as LGBTQ workers and those with physical disabilities, may also find that the unique forms of discrimination they experience lead to separate feeling rules. This study also raises questions about the consequences of racialized feeling rules

and if they cause negative or positive consequences for one's health and could contribute to the literature examining the causes behind why there are so few women of color in STEM. In this study, most respondents were very certain of severe punishment, (e.g. being fired, negative sanctions from supervisors, ostracism from colleagues) that they chose not to break the feeling rules they felt applied to them. However, as some of the results show, some black women professionals did violate the feeling rule of concealing anger without incurring punishment or censure. This may suggest that there is not necessarily one way to think about power dynamics in workplaces and this might guide us towards imagining a way to unveil the complexity of these gendered and racialized organizations and to rethink them as environments that are not solely static entities, but are instead constantly in flux.

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